

MIC MISSION NEWS

MAY-JUNE 1998



Sister Jeanne Tchean

Love goes a long way...

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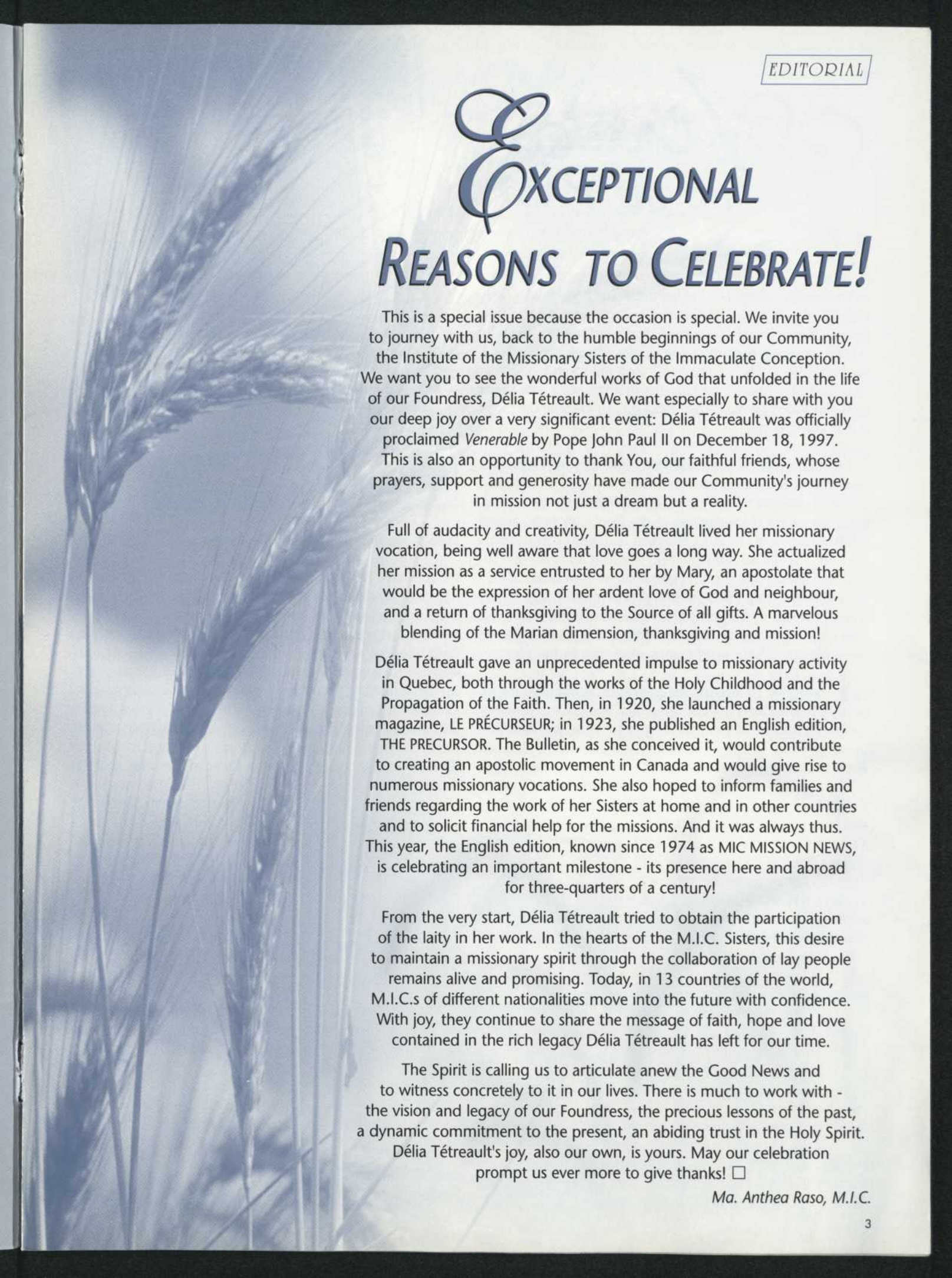
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EXCEPTIONAL REASONS TO CELEBRATE!

This is a special issue because the occasion is special. We invite you to journey with us, back to the humble beginnings of our Community, the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. We want you to see the wonderful works of God that unfolded in the life of our Foundress, Délia Tétreault. We want especially to share with you our deep joy over a very significant event: Délia Tétreault was officially proclaimed *Venerable* by Pope John Paul II on December 18, 1997.

This is also an opportunity to thank You, our faithful friends, whose prayers, support and generosity have made our Community's journey in mission not just a dream but a reality.

Full of audacity and creativity, Délia Tétreault lived her missionary vocation, being well aware that love goes a long way. She actualized her mission as a service entrusted to her by Mary, an apostolate that would be the expression of her ardent love of God and neighbour, and a return of thanksgiving to the Source of all gifts. A marvelous blending of the Marian dimension, thanksgiving and mission!

Délia Tétreault gave an unprecedented impulse to missionary activity in Quebec, both through the works of the Holy Childhood and the Propagation of the Faith. Then, in 1920, she launched a missionary magazine, *LE PRÉCURSEUR*; in 1923, she published an English edition, *THE PRECURSOR*. The Bulletin, as she conceived it, would contribute to creating an apostolic movement in Canada and would give rise to numerous missionary vocations. She also hoped to inform families and friends regarding the work of her Sisters at home and in other countries and to solicit financial help for the missions. And it was always thus. This year, the English edition, known since 1974 as *MIC MISSION NEWS*, is celebrating an important milestone - its presence here and abroad for three-quarters of a century!

From the very start, Délia Tétreault tried to obtain the participation of the laity in her work. In the hearts of the M.I.C. Sisters, this desire to maintain a missionary spirit through the collaboration of lay people remains alive and promising. Today, in 13 countries of the world, M.I.C.s of different nationalities move into the future with confidence. With joy, they continue to share the message of faith, hope and love contained in the rich legacy Délia Tétreault has left for our time.

The Spirit is calling us to articulate anew the Good News and to witness concretely to it in our lives. There is much to work with - the vision and legacy of our Foundress, the precious lessons of the past, a dynamic commitment to the present, an abiding trust in the Holy Spirit.

Délia Tétreault's joy, also our own, is yours. May our celebration prompt us ever more to give thanks! □

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

LISTENING TO *W*ITNESSES...

Some valuable pages have been written by witnesses concerning the influence of the life and activity of Délia Tétreault. They bring to light her profound dynamism and prolong the great inspiration that visited her. Here is what we have gathered.

December 1938! Délia had been paralyzed five years. She sent her wishes to Archbishop Paul Bruchési of Montreal on the occasion of his 60th year in the priesthood. Having witnessed the foundation of the Community of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, he knew Délia Tétreault. He saw the mustard seed thrown in the ground become a strong tree flowing with sap. He wrote to her:

(...) What a long way you have come since your foundation! Your houses have multiplied as though by a miracle. Generous hearts have eagerly come to you. Your missions enjoy prosperity everywhere. Our people have been noble and generous to you. The Church loves and blesses you. Among our holy missionaries, you are of the first rank. May Heaven keep looking upon you with love and pour its choicest blessings on you and your great

works. It is amid suffering so generously accepted that you contemplate the admirable achievements of your religious family. May the Lord continue to sustain and protect you, and may He restore your strength, if such is His will.

Délia yearned for God with her whole being. She constantly and at times laboriously sought to respond to His calls. This constant, extraordinary desire was expressed in a multitude of ways. In the 60's, an M.I.C. of the early days, Sr. Imelda Robitaille, also testified to this.

Overwork and insomnia, which were customary to her, hardly did her any good; yet her courage never wavered, no obstacle could stop her when she was convinced that the good Lord wanted something. Her spirit of faith, her confidence in Divine Providence were so fervent and deep that they overflowed on us and, somehow,

electrified us ... It took a woman of this caliber to launch a new work in Canada without having any material resources and despite such a frail health. Dr. Aubry, who had been her physician for a long time, would say that only one of the illnesses she had (lung and heart diseases) could kill her in no time. But then, where did she draw the insights and the energy that enabled her to realize, during her eventful life, such an extensive and amazing work? Undoubtedly from the Holy Spirit to whose guidance her whole life was submitted.

Fr. Marie-Bernard Martelet, a French Trappist, became acquainted with Délia Tétreault through the M.I.C. Sisters of Malawi, Africa. His letters to us and two articles published in a review on Marian spirituality eloquently speak of the sense of awe with which he was inspired by Délia's life... Concerning the steps



Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit and young women of the Apostolic School. Montreal, 1906

In the countryside of Canton. A mobile clinic with some students of our school. China, 1924



Heroic times when the M.I.C.s embarked for life. Departure for China. 1932

taken for the beatification of our Foundress, he wrote:

This is not a matter of prestige or vain-glory. It is rather the duty to recognize the presence and action of God in the spiritual journey of Délia for the foundation of the Community of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Her community must spread the missionary spirit of thanksgiving throughout the world. For the daughters of Délia, thanksgiving is not only a state of the soul, it is a duty, a mission to be carried out: to awaken among the Christian people the awareness of the necessity to give thanks. It is a fact, Christians know how to ask God for favours, but they forget to give Him thanks. (...)

Bishop Gilles Ouellet, P.M.E. came to know Délia Tétreault through the influence of her apostolic works. He showed the impact of the zeal she displayed in getting Canada to join in the missionary thrust of the Church of the 20th century.

Délia Tétreault, Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit, was sent by the Lord at a specific moment in the history of the Church in Quebec and in Canada. She made the Church of Quebec aware of her own responsibility, as people of God - a

collective responsibility to be missionary in foreign lands and to develop within herself a missionary spirit. In my view, this was a call of the Spirit, a gift to the Church of Quebec (...) Her sense of the mission of a missionary Church, with a missionary spirit at home and also a missionary spirit that expands and spreads throughout the world, had to come from such farsightedness as can only be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Léo-Paul Bourassa, a Jesuit spiritual director, who died in 1979, has extensively scrutinized and admired the spirit of our Foundress. He wrote:

Thus directed by the Holy Spirit, Délia Tétreault found herself thinking, acting, reacting and loving in the manner of Our Lord. What I especially wish to emphasize is that her spirit of thanksgiving, joy and gratitude was not something she simply imagined or invented; it was the very foundation of her life, as it was the very foundation of the life of Christ. Thanksgiving that comes to fruition finds its expression in the missionary apostolate. It is obvious from her response of love that she had received from the Holy Spirit a most vivid experience of God's love for her ... hence a response of joy, thanksgiving and service.

Renowned historian and poet, Benoît Lacroix, O.P., studied the life of Délia. With the passing years, he continued to bring to light the inspiration he discovered in our Foundress.

What strikes me, now that I have learned more about Délia Tétreault, is her prophetic charism. From a historical perspective, it is amazing to hear her speak in a prophetic way of international missionary activity. What is even more surprising is that she devoted herself to thanksgiving and to the Holy Spirit decades before these themes became popular in the West - and that greatly influenced the Eucharist (...) A theological spirituality and, at the same time, a penchant for thanksgiving despite countless difficulties.

(...) An aspect of Délia Tétreault's spirituality - a spirituality that is very modern, very post-Vatican, very liturgical, very prophetic - is her spirit of thanksgiving. Believe me, she has taken all! I, myself am in thanksgiving because of Délia Tétreault.

François X. Courteau, nephew of the Foundress, recalled his memories:

It is as though I see this aunt, Mother Marie du St-Esprit, of delicate health, always concerned with her work to be

A Mission Workroom at the Mother House, Outremont, 1938.



A group of retreatants, Outremont, 1949. The project of retreats for women and young girls began in 1911.



Religious of Our Lady of the Rosary, a local Community accompanied by the M.I.C.s from the outset of their foundation. Szepinghai, 1940



Photos: M.I.C. Archives



Setting out to visit the sick, Manchuria

she devoted her Community to thanksgiving? Her discretion, which was all out of charity, was that of the saints. Her desire to know the will of God and to do it at all cost, her prudence and her lively faith evidenced in her works, her unworldliness, her spirit of prayer and her habitual state of recollection, her fiery zeal for the interests of her dear good Master, as she loved to call Him in private, her sincerity which excluded any affectation in speech or behaviour, her motherly kindness, exempt of weakness, toward her Daughters, and lastly the constant and, at times, heroic practice of all these virtues give me an assurance based on Christian hope that Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit has conquered the kingdom of the Blessed.

Some serious problems arose in the Community. They gave rise to many questions among the generations of the Daughters of Délia Tétreault. Here is the testimony of people who have questioned the M.I.C.s on this matter during the Diocesan Inquiry on the virtues practised by our Foundress.

We succeeded with some difficulty in getting a perception of the problems that occurred in the Community, because the discretion required by the Foundress concerning those painful events was mandatory. One thing, however, remains certain for all the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, that is: Délia Tétreault suffered terrible trials which could have destroyed anyone, but her life of faith enabled her to resist all storms. The Sisters knew that their Foundress was experiencing serious problems, but they did not know what they were and they saw with their own eyes how their Venerable Mother stood firm with an unshakable faith. □

founded; I see her again, quite simple, of unequalled modesty and charity in her words and in her actions; combining gentleness with firmness, and especially her great confidence in Divine Providence: at my age, I thought so much faith was a strange thing ... I experienced all the kindness and caring of this good aunt towards her large family; but the best page in my memories, and the most comforting, was when at a time of trial she came and recited the Rosary with those in attendance at the death of my wife. I was impressed by so much confidence and faith; it was as though she had just lost her own mother. For a whole hour, she gave me, I would say, a private audience in my boudoir. She spoke to me about the will of God, about the meaning, necessity and merit of suffering, about the strength of the Holy Spirit, and she conveyed to me her confidence in God's holy Providence. She made me accept this trial and gave me that courage which has never failed me for the past 35 years.

For Antoinette Rayneault, M.I.C., who died in 1990, hope was the interior rock on which Délia constantly rested and from which she leapt into action; she never relied on herself or counted merely on human resources. Her confidence was in God, in the

faithfulness and patience of His love, which knows how to bring to successful completion the plan He has made.

She had such great confidence in Providence; she expected all things from Providence; she counted on Providence, who would inspire her, as events unfolded, what needed to be done. She was most respectful of the will of God, she worshipped it! Therefore, she would not deviate from this will; so much so that at the beginning of the foundation she would say, Dear Good Master, - this is how she often called the good Lord, - tell me what you expect of me: is it an Apostolic School, is it an Institute devoted to the missions, is it something else? Tell me, I want to do your will.

Deceased in 1996, Anne-Marie Magnan, M.I.C., knew Délia Tétreault intimately. She was her private secretary before becoming a Councillor and Secretary General in 1931, therefore, ten years before the death of the Foundress. Her testimony, which is rigorously exact, cannot be called into question.

She was humble of heart and profoundly grateful to God; is there any need to mention this when we know that

A LEGACY TO BE SHARED

By PAULINE LONGTIN, M.I.C.

To collect in the letters and mementos of Délia Tétreault the legacy that makes our Community alive. To interview the people who knew her. To write and have others write about Délia. To highlight her spirituality. To take on the challenge of presenting to Rome the request for the canonization of Délia and to go through the long process of her official recognition as Venerable. It took a woman such as Pauline Longtin, M.I.C., to direct these important projects for more than 16 years and to bring them to realization. Our family heirloom has been in good hands, and still today, Sr. Pauline continues to bring out its worth.

In the foreword of his biography on Délia Tétreault, historian Yves Raguin, S.J., writes: *Understanding Délia Tétreault is important, because at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, she had a vision of the universal Church that was ahead of her times. What matters, too, are her deep motivations that flowed from the working of the Spirit, who inspired her in all her works and all along her existence. Hence the need for anyone wishing to learn from her to keep going deeper into the content of her spiritual testament.*

A BEQUEATHED TREASURE ...

When we speak of an inheritance, one that must today be made to yield profit, we obviously speak of assets which the author of the will owned, for one cannot give what one does not have. The legacy of Délia Tétreault, as a whole, is quite specific - it is a spirituality of thanksgiving which is both Marian and missionary: *The main raison d'être of our Society is truly thanksgiving in union with our*



Sr. Pauline Longtin shares her love for Africa, where she has been on mission for 15 years.

Immaculate Mother (...) The Blessed Virgin inspired our apostolate among non-Christians as an external means of manifesting our gratitude.

Délia did not invent thanksgiving, nor the mission, nor devotion to Mary. Surely not! The Bible is full of expressions of thanksgiving. The mission dates back to the time of the prophets and Jesus was the missionary par excellence. As to devotion to Mary, this is retraced back to the Church of the third century. Délia thus did not invent any of this. But, as far as I know, it is the first time in the Church that one finds these three dimensions of thanksgiving, of mission and commitment in the manner of Mary reunited in a single spirituality and this is the originality of Délia Tétreault. She has truly innovated, says Fr. Paolo Molinari, S.J., theologian in charge of presenting to Rome the request for the beatification of our Foundress.



Délia's dream continues to open hearts to the vast horizons of the mission. France Philie, M.I.C., in charge of the Délia Tétreault Centre

A TREASURE THAT WAS FIRST RECEIVED ...

Where had such a clear vision come from to Délia, that caused her to state with conviction *the main raison d'être* of the missionary Institute she had founded? It had come from a deep spiritual experience, from a coming to awareness that had enraptured and confirmed her in her great journey: *God has given us everything, even His own Son: what better way to repay Him ... than to give Him children, chosen ones, who also will sing of His goodness forever and ever. May our entire lives then be, through prayer, sacrifice and work, a perpetual hymn of gratitude for ourselves and for all those who forget to thank the One to whom they owe everything.*

WHAT TREASURE?

Here is the great secret of the Venerable Délia: dazzled by the lavish and freely-given love of her God *who has given us everything*, a love which she received in awe, she wanted, like Mary of the Magnificat, to render grace for grace and to tell this Good News to everyone. Yes, she had contemplated and meditated at length on this mystery of the love of God our Father, to the point of exclaiming one day: *When I stop and think that God loves me divinely in spite of my deep wretchedness, I feel that I am the happiest creature in the world ... and you too, my sisters, be happy, for He fills us with grace!*

To radiate that which makes us alive. This directive is found time and time again in her correspondence with her missionaries. To the Sisters of China, in 1917, she wrote: *What can be better than to give others happiness and God's love? Yes, lavish these divine gifts.* Délia, therefore, did not content herself with savouring her experience of God's love, she drew others to follow her in her ardent desire to communicate this love to people of all races and nations.



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

Maria Christina Pulido, M.I.C., Cuban, (r.) makes Délia Tétreault known.



Young people from the Dominican Republic visit the Délia Tétreault Centre.

As was the case for Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, with whom she had obvious spiritual connections, the thought that God was her Father banished all fear from Délia Tétreault and incited her to confidence and self-surrender. She was sure of the attentive presence and loving care of the One who *feeds the birds of the air and watches over the grass of the field* and she often used these expressions in her letters. Because of this unshakable conviction, she was able to write to her sisters of Shek Lung in 1916: *If we ever came to understand this truth that Our Lord is all at once our Father, our Mother, our Friend, the One in whom we find everything (...) how happy our lives would become!* For Délia, then, seeing God as a Father did not mean accepting domination, it meant receiving love and that was the secret of her peace and of her joy.

A TREASURE TO BE SHARED ...

In her spiritual testament, Délia Tétreault gave us a valuable and eminently practical message: *How to give thanks, how to repay God who gave us everything, how to render grace for grace like Mary. God gave us everything, we must in turn give to Him.* This is not simply a matter of saying the words THANK YOU. God gave us His Son, Délia wanted, in turn, to give Him other sons, other daughters ... And why? The purpose

of mission is very important and Délia expressed this clearly: she wanted to give God children who, having received the Good News of Jesus who came to save them, may sing to the goodness of God forever and ever. Song is the expression of joy, happiness, and this is what Délia invited us to communicate to whomever we meet on our way: *being devoted to gratitude, it is our duty to give joy, to bring others to thank the Good Lord, which is better done when one is happy.* She kept repeating to her sisters: *Make a resolution to give each day the alms of a little joy.*

Thanksgiving, joy, happiness, mission ... *The first praise to God is to be happy,* thus André Sève tells us. Fr. Larrañaga goes on in the same vein: *We must sow the seed of peace and hope in the world. Life was given us to be happy and to make others happy and we make others happy to the extent that we ourselves are. God our Father placed us in a garden - shall we transform this garden into a valley of tears by our lack of faith, love and wisdom?*

Délia extends to us the same invitation: *Spread joy abundantly!* In 1926, she wrote to her missionaries of Vancouver: *Fight against sadness and melancholy. Joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; joy is sunshine; what would become of us if the good*

Lord had not given us His beautiful sun to shine for us and warm us up? She similarly wrote to those in Japan: *Joy is the sunshine without which one withers in life.*

WHAT CAN BE BETTER?

Pope John Paul II reminds us that *in our Church, at the dawn of the year 2000, we need dynamism, audacity and creativity in order to give rise to new evangelization projects, that our Church may become real Good News.* Projects, I would say, that respond to the prompting of the Spirit and to the needs of our times. There is a need to lift the veil of gloom that covers our world, to give it hope and joy again by helping it to know and recognize the presence of God as Creator and Father; the presence of God who is the source of that joy which no one can take away from us. Then the world will be able to sing, or sing again *to the goodness of God* as we are invited to do by Délia whom the Church has acknowledged as a source of inspiration and a dynamic example for the Christian people, by declaring her VENERABLE.

Therefore, in order to live by the spiritual legacy of Délia Tétreault and by her charism of Marian and missionary thanksgiving, why not make our own her so often repeated invitation: *What can be better than to give others happiness and God's love!* ☐



M.I.C. Sisters at a liturgical celebration
(l. to r.): Chicko Uchimara, Japanese, Mary Hsu, Chinese and Monique Cloutier, Canadian

Photo: É. Plamondon, M.I.C.

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♥ HEARTFELT THANKS ♥

Magnificat

*Aging Elizabeth sat, spinning, at her front door,
listening and watching for late steps from afar ...*

*On the footpath came her cousin Mary,
the one from Nazareth, who hastened to see her.*

*Here came Mary with great news of her own to share:
which had happened within her that week, not long ago ...
Elizabeth saw her and ran to her embrace,
leaving her unfinished yarn to roll in the wind.*

*God knows what secrets the two of them at once
had to tell each other! Yet conversation
suddenly ran short as they trembled for joy.
At a loss for words, they uttered not a one.*

*Each of them searched within herself for assurance
before confiding to the other, without delay
and in a loud voice, the hope that surpassed all hope.
Was it really true? ... My God! What if it were not!*

*But the miracle suddenly moved in their souls,
in their bodies! The silence surrounding them wavered!
She, the young maiden, and she, the elderly woman,
quivered: their little ones spoke, each to the other.*

*This is impossible, O God! It is a dream ...
Impossible! Yet more real than anything, more real
Than the sun you see. And the heart of Mary
sang for it like a blooming bush in May.*

*She started, ascending, rising in her flight,
she went up and reached, unhampered, the very throne of God.
She sang, forever lifted above the earth,
she sang, forever lost in the highest blue of heaven.*

*Raptured beyond knowing, reality or a wild dream,
A lie or the pure truth, reason or insanity,
Except that her God is almighty
and a mother she was to be ...□*



Marie Noël

Choosing our Future Together

BY MICHELLE PAYETTE, M.I.C.

The future depends on the decisions we make today. To move towards the future, one needs to assess the present situation and choose among several possible courses of action. In the case of a missionary Community that has lived through a century and has been all over the world, many challenges are to be faced. Last October, two international M.I.C. meetings were decisive in this regard. Sr. Michelle Payette, Secretary General, reports to us on these events.



M.I.C. Sisters
of different
nationalities.
Michelle Payette
(3rd row, 2nd r.)

There are M.I.C. Sisters in 13 countries of the world. After the example of Délia Tétreault, our Foundress, the members of our Community - today more than 750, of various nationalities - commit their whole lives to the universal mission. And this, simply because the love and gratuity of God mark them. Thanksgiving is thus the dynamic force behind our missionary vocation.

We have now entered a new era of missionary endeavour: a new order of global mission, new agents of the mission, new possible partnerships, etc. The physiognomy of our Community reflects these changes. The international character of the Institute, the socio-economic and cultural situation of the countries where we are, the number and age of the M.I.C. Sisters, the urgent needs of local missions - all of this has repercussions on our way of living the mission. Since 1990, we have engaged in a comprehensive Pastoral Plan: *Choosing our Future Together*. This project expresses our priorities about the mission and emphasizes planning of personnel, ministries, financial resources and membership formation. Ongoing evaluation of this program is a necessity. In the fall of 1997, two meetings were held on this subject, one for those in charge of M.I.C. religious formation and the other for the provincial superiors.

MISSION-ORIENTED

Today, 70 young women from various cultural environments are being initiated in the religious missionary life. From the time of their entrance, the initial formation aims at developing their sense of mission and preparing them for a mission abroad. They are also discovering the spirituality of our Community and are learning to live it. Some important resources are invested in the adequate preparation of these candidates. During three weeks, the formators coming from different countries evaluated their formation programmes and reflected on the future of our Institute.

The question of mission outside one's country keeps on recurring during the formation process. Those concerned are confronted with choices to be made: between apostolic audacity and the status quo, between an intense preparation for mission and putting off the experience in another Church till later. The formators must weigh the impact of these options on the missionary dynamism of the Church and on that of our Community.

Each M.I.C. comes face to face with internationality in her lived experience. Over the passing years, there have been commitments in this regard: the inclusion of several

nationalities on the General Council, the International Scholasticate, the learning of a second language of communication, etc. Between CALLING OURSELVES an international Institute because of our physical presence in different countries and BECOMING a prophetic international religious Congregation, there is a long process of personal and communal conversion. The meeting gave the formators the opportunity to share and enrich their understanding of this reality. The testimony of Nancy Vy So, M.I.C., sheds some light on the challenges and richness of internationality that many among us are called upon to live:

Whenever someone asks me where I come from, I always feel at a loss for words. My story goes like this: I am Chinese, born in the Philippines. I emigrated to Los Angeles when I was 22. I spent my initial formation years with the M.I.C. Sisters in San Francisco. I am now a Canadian citizen and I live my mission in Taiwan. In short, I am a child of the universe and the world is my home. In 1990, when I was assigned to Taiwan and when I was exposed to Chinese literature, Chinese arts and stories, I was fascinated by the wisdom of Chinese writings. In my contacts with the people, I started to understand my parents, their mentality and the values that they were trying to impart to us. I have experienced returning home to my cultural roots. I think it is very important for each one to return to her own cultural roots so as to be free to move on to another culture. Because I have appreciated the beauty of my Chinese culture, I feel that I can better appreciate that of other cultures.

Becoming aware of our lived experience of internationality and deepening and sharing the values that gather us in the name of Jesus open to us new horizons for living our mission together. With hearts becoming more universal, we can then call ourselves an *International Institute*.

TO MAKE HEADWAY IN THE CHOSEN DIRECTION

From October 12 to 18, 1997, the provincial superiors and the members of the General Council examined the implementation of the Pastoral Plan in each Province. This phase provided a broad, international perspective of the Institute, making it possible to make on-course readjustments. Some persistent concerns were brought up: the mission of the Institute, its internationality, the formation of our young sisters, the commitment of lay missionaries and the ASMIC. Through these shared experiences, we discovered the life, hopes and trials of the peoples and Churches with whom we are in solidarity. This review of the life of our Community, which we carried out together, spoke to us of young shoots and new branches on the M.I.C. tree.

We are ruled by life's events. The best prepared plans are no guarantee against surprises. We therefore wondered if any new concerns could be added to our plans. A number of questions were then put before us. What is the impact

of globalization on the organization of economic, social and cultural life in our countries? What is its impact on the structures of religious life? Also, concerning the calls of the Church in the letter of Pope John Paul II on religious life: What renewed service is required of us? What resources do we have for responding? We are asked to integrate these new concerns, linking them with our priorities.

All that we have today was built with courage and faith by our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, and by those who came before us. This heritage has inspired our research and our sharing. It now prompts us to cross over the threshold of the 21st century with confidence and faith, energized by a love that knows no boundaries. □



M.I.C. novices
Philippines



Haitian M.I.C.s
in festive
costumes

African novices and
Yolanda Oducado,
Filipina M.I.C.



Photos: M.I.C.

The Same Family! The Same Mission!



ASMIC members and M.I.C. Sisters - welcome and dialogue

By LÉONIE THERRIEN, M.I.C.

At the turn of the 21st century, we witness a growing membership to the ASMIC, the network of lay people associated to the M.I.C. Community. ASMIC members are also in the process of developing closer bonds of solidarity and belonging with the M.I.C. Community. Last October 18 and 19, a congress gave the ASMIC of Quebec new vitality and opened to them avenues of future commitment and collaboration with us. Sr. Léonie Therrien, one of the pioneers of the ASMIC group of Laval, tells us about this gathering.

The same family! The same mission! This was the theme of the ASMIC-M.I.C. Congress which gathered approximately 100 ASMIC members and nearly 80 M.I.C. Sisters. This meeting was quite a family event. For the first time in the history of our Community, we focused on deepening our mutual bonds and telling each other our mutual expectations in the current context of missionary activity. The two-day program was designed to help us make progress on this important point.

REVIEWING OUR MISSION

The goal of the first day was to realize that the main actors of evangelization in the year 2000 will be the laity - that they will work together with the priests and religious. With Fr. François Lapierre, P.M.E., we saw that in this mission, one will have to think in terms of unity rather than difference, in terms of calls and gifts received rather than function. We also reflected on the solidity given to us by baptism and on the dynamic experience of faith. Then, Yvon Thérout of the *Centre d'information*

sur les nouvelles religions (Information Centre on New Religions) helped us to take a second look at our world, at the pluralism of the Quebec society, at current beliefs and at the faith that must be transmitted. Sr. Pauline Longtin, M.I.C., delved with us into the content of the spiritual testament of Délia Tétreault: her Marian and missionary spirituality of thanksgiving. Our workshop discussions on the writings of Délia brought us extraordinary insights and strength.

REVIEWING OUR FAMILY BONDS

This Congress urged us to go even further. We reviewed our bonds with one another as ASMIC and M.I.C. One might ask how the M.I.C. Sisters view the ASMIC. How do they regard their integration in the Community? Their presence in the mission? What do they expect of the ASMIC? Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C., Superior General, was our spokesperson on this question. She showed how Délia herself laid the foundations of lay cooperation in the Community. Délia did not merely extend

her hand to the laity to beg for their help. We reflected on her way of developing with these people bonds of prayer, friendship, actual commitment ... in short, a kind of M.I.C.-lay association. *We are continuing in the same trend*, Sr. Évangéline says. *The ASMIC participate in the charism and mission of the Institute and in the ministries that flow from them. The dream of Délia herself lives in their hearts. They know their ASMIC identity and share simply and discreetly the faith they received. Their collaboration in the Missionary Press, their presence among the immigrants and their support of the sending of lay and M.I.C. missionaries are valuable and needed.*

Allow me, she adds, to mention two of my most cherished dreams: that the ASMIC may continue to help us - M.I.C. Sisters - to become more and more deeply imbued with the spirituality bequeathed to us by Mother Délia and that they may help us to share it among ourselves and with others. My second dream? That the ASMIC may experience with us being sent to other countries. That after taking the time to get sound training, some Associates may go with M.I.C. Sisters



Bonds are woven between the M.I.C.s and ASMIC members here and abroad.

and live a few years in foreign missions. (...) There have been such send-off, such experiences; they must not stop. And if I may keep on expressing wishes: that the ASMIC may grow closer to the young people. Young people? Why would the ASMIC not help us to find young women interested in the M.I.C. life? Since we belong to the same family, finding new recruits is a challenge that concerns us all.

DEEP CONVICTIONS

What about the ASMIC? How do they see themselves in this great missionary family? How do they perceive their membership and participation? Three complementary approaches made it possible to answer these questions. Fr. Gaston Pinard, C.S.V., gave a presentation on the identity and mission of one who is associated to a religious Community. A panel discussion followed by workshops gave the Associates the opportunity to express themselves on their call to the M.I.C. charism and on their way of living it out.

- At the early age of five, the Holy Childhood awakened in me the sense of belonging and solidarity with the missionaries. The journey continues today ... I have been retired for two years. As I was paging through *LE PRÉCURSEUR*, I came upon an article that spoke of the involvement of lay people. I asked Sr. Véronique Bernatchez, M.I.C., if I could be of any help. Today, I am involved in my parish, I help with the circulation of the M.I.C. mission magazines and I have taken steps to join the ASMIC. Délia Tétreault left me the precious legacy of joy and confidence in Divine Providence.

Gilles Côté

- In 1930, at the M.I.C. house of Simard Street in Quebec City, I met Délia Tétreault. I was three years old. She placed her hand on my head and said to me: Will you be as generous as your great-uncle? My uncle Adolphe Desroches went grocery shopping every Saturday morning for the M.I.C.s. God has His plans ... I never thought I would become associated with the M.I.C.s. My wife and I share the values we discover in the writings of Délia at our ASMIC meetings. Her faith, her joy, her desire to do the will of God, her way of giving thanks to the Lord, her concern to live the present moment well - all are a source of strength and grace for us.

Jacques Demers

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

This Congress drew us, ASMIC and M.I.C. Sisters, closer to one another. We now better recognize what each of us represents for the others and what our mutual responsibilities are.

- I became aware of the importance of belonging to the great M.I.C. family and to participate in its life. I also

understood that, no matter what mission is entrusted to us, whether small or great, it is all important in the eyes of God. This weekend increased my desire for a foreign mission. I came out of this Congress with a heart burning with love for my mission. I feel a greater need to give myself to others.

Raymonde Paradis

- Having been an ASMIC member for four years, I feel that I want to get more involved with the M.I.C. Sisters. The Congress made me understand the ASMIC's commitment toward the M.I.C.s and that of the Sisters towards us. New horizons are yet to be opened for a better mutual participation and understanding. For my part, I feel a strong call to alleviate the solitude of the elderly and sick sisters. I see the need of a group of volunteers to help out in this area.

Claire Latendresse

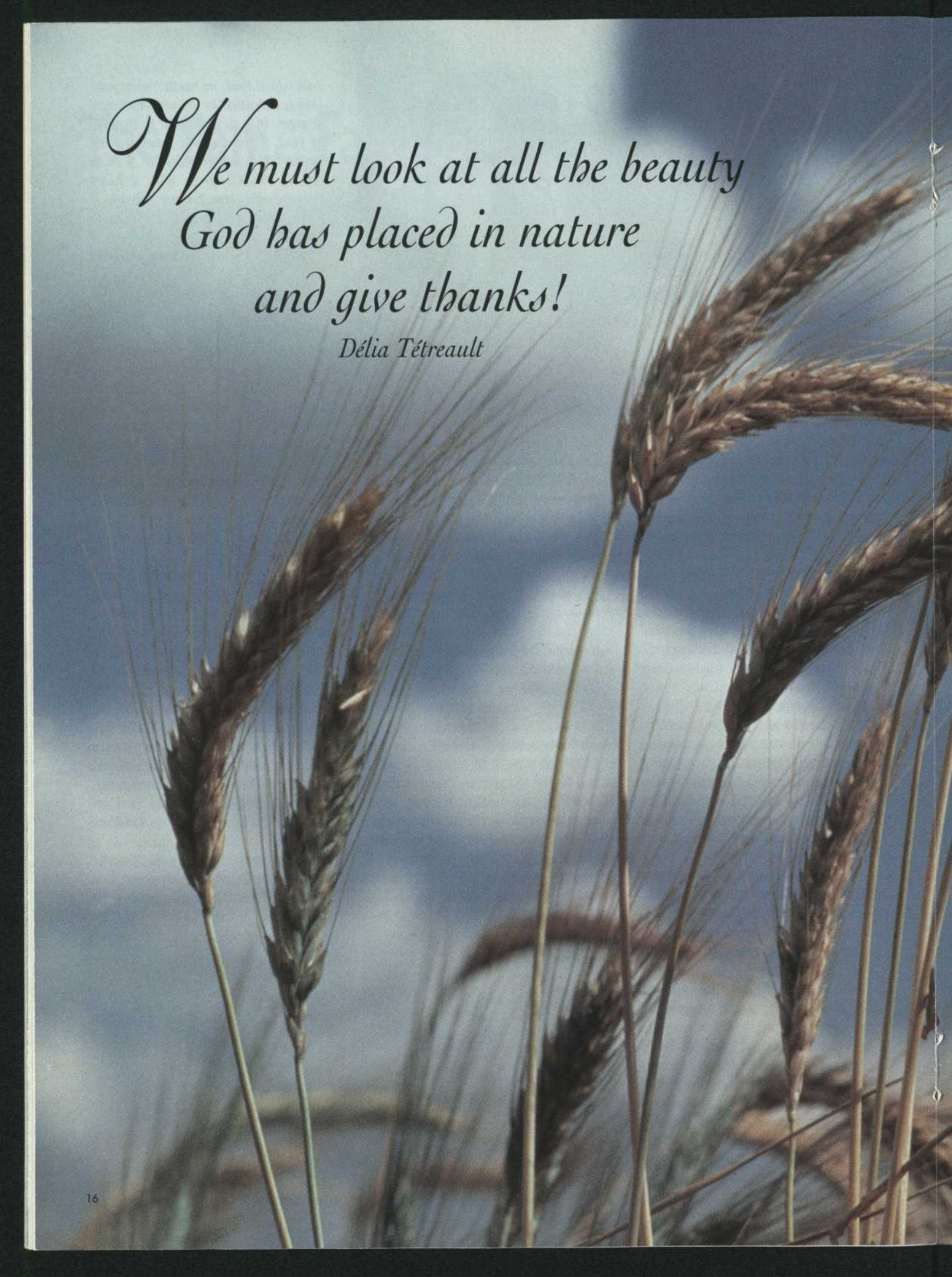
- Through the M.I.C. Sisters I meet, I get in touch with the spirituality of the Community, with the missionary life and its challenges and with the commitment of the Church. The Congress was a happy event. It allowed me to share and experience closer fellowship with the M.I.C.s. I thus came out of it with questions concerning my own witness as an ASMIC, concerning my commitment and my way of living in thanksgiving. I want to go further.

Clémence Leblanc

The same mission! The same family! This, the theme of the congress, has become a life and a commitment. □



ASMIC members make their commitment during the Congress.



*We must look at all the beauty
God has placed in nature
and give thanks!*

Délia Tétreault





THE SHADOW

By CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU

In our life, there is often more shadow than light. But the exceptional moments of vivid clarity carry infinite weight and importance. They transform our existence and even transfigure it, says Christian Beaulieu. We discover reserves of strength, courage and aptitudes to live out the demands of love. The Apostles Peter, John and James, our Foundress, Délia Tétreault and many others are witnesses of this light for each one of us. The Holy Spirit enlightens our lives.

Délia Tétreault, at the age of twenty, had an experience of the Holy Spirit which marked her for life. As a result, she became like a burning fire. She would have gone to the ends of the earth in search of the lost sheep. From then on, her courage was equal to anything. She would have travelled across the world, through vales and mountains, turned heaven and earth upside down, to warm up the earth that was getting cold. She would have laid down not only her own life, but a hundred lives that as many as possible might know such happiness.

STRANGE, TRANSFIGURING EVENTS IN OUR LIVES

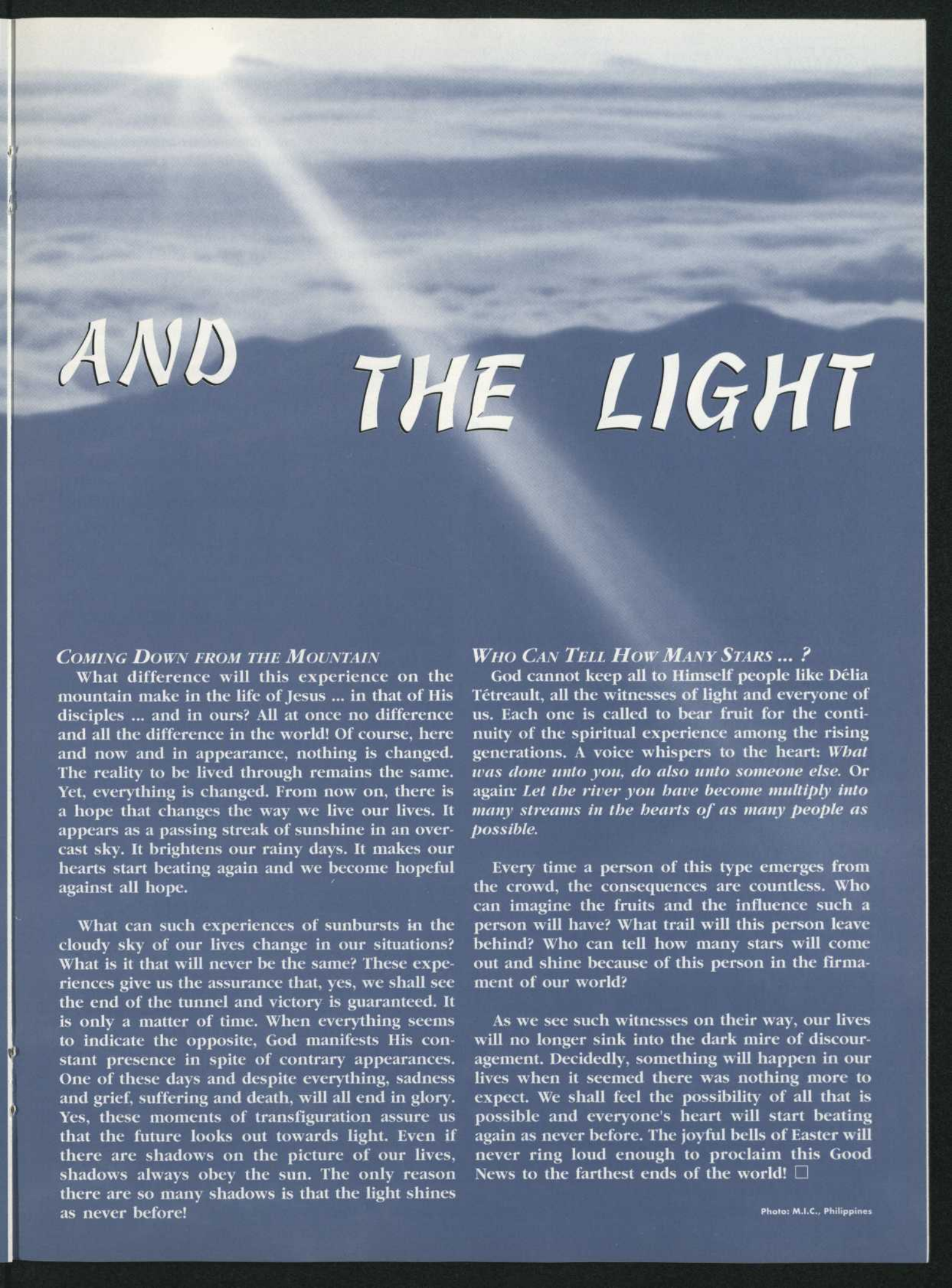
The Apostles Peter, James and John had a similar experience at the Transfiguration, as recounted in Luke 9:28-36. Strange indeed are those events in which the glory of God sometimes becomes perceptible, tangible. Events in which we burn with divine fire and are consumed by the living flames of love. Events in which we see the world and those dear to us in a completely different light.

Have you ever experienced such transfigurations in your personal lives? I think, for instance, of this lady on a visit in a hospital who complained about another rainy day. In the very same elevator, a little boy with a cancerous brain tumor remarked: *Well, Madam, if you only knew how happy I am to see this rainy day. It is probably my last time seeing*

and bearing it; I appreciate it so much! Here is someone who is undergoing a transfiguration! Now it is up to us, you and me, to choose: between figure and *trans-figure*, between appearance and *trans-parence*, between the top layer, the surface of things and their underside, their depth, between the image and the icon ...

Underneath the distressing disabilities caused by an accident, a malformation or a disability may hide diamonds of exquisite beauty, which will sparkle brilliantly for all eternity. Yet we can discover their hidden worth, their buried treasure. When such insights flash into our existence, hit us right in the heart, let us not protect ourselves against them. When they storm upon us, as when on a voyage aboard a ship our faces are sprayed all over by the waves of the sea, let us allow the impact of these experiences to shake up our lethargy and mark us!

We may be tempted, like Peter on the mountain of Transfiguration, to fall into a deep sleep and to escape the demands of love. Like him, we perhaps want to build our tent and God's with our own hands. Like him, we would perhaps prefer not to come down from the mountain and carry on the struggle that is ours in the plain. How many there are among us who would like to win the victory without going to the battle field!



AND THE LIGHT

COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

What difference will this experience on the mountain make in the life of Jesus ... in that of His disciples ... and in ours? All at once no difference and all the difference in the world! Of course, here and now and in appearance, nothing is changed. The reality to be lived through remains the same. Yet, everything is changed. From now on, there is a hope that changes the way we live our lives. It appears as a passing streak of sunshine in an overcast sky. It brightens our rainy days. It makes our hearts start beating again and we become hopeful against all hope.

What can such experiences of sunbursts in the cloudy sky of our lives change in our situations? What is it that will never be the same? These experiences give us the assurance that, yes, we shall see the end of the tunnel and victory is guaranteed. It is only a matter of time. When everything seems to indicate the opposite, God manifests His constant presence in spite of contrary appearances. One of these days and despite everything, sadness and grief, suffering and death, will all end in glory. Yes, these moments of transfiguration assure us that the future looks out towards light. Even if there are shadows on the picture of our lives, shadows always obey the sun. The only reason there are so many shadows is that the light shines as never before!

WHO CAN TELL HOW MANY STARS ... ?

God cannot keep all to Himself people like Délia Tétreault, all the witnesses of light and everyone of us. Each one is called to bear fruit for the continuity of the spiritual experience among the rising generations. A voice whispers to the heart: *What was done unto you, do also unto someone else.* Or again: *Let the river you have become multiply into many streams in the hearts of as many people as possible.*

Every time a person of this type emerges from the crowd, the consequences are countless. Who can imagine the fruits and the influence such a person will have? What trail will this person leave behind? Who can tell how many stars will come out and shine because of this person in the firmament of our world?

As we see such witnesses on their way, our lives will no longer sink into the dark mire of discouragement. Decidedly, something will happen in our lives when it seemed there was nothing more to expect. We shall feel the possibility of all that is possible and everyone's heart will start beating again as never before. The joyful bells of Easter will never ring loud enough to proclaim this Good News to the farthest ends of the world! □



ANNE-MARIE LAVOIE

Mond'Ami (The World, our Friend). What a lovely name for the movement which, in Quebec, awakens the children to missionary cooperation and solidarity. Working together with the Holy Childhood, known since 1964 as Enfance Missionnaire (Missionary Childhood), Mond'Ami ardently keeps going. What is it like now, after 25 years? Anne-Marie Lavoie, National Secretary of the movement, answers this question with insight and conviction, attentive to hail the contribution of one of her worthy predecessors, Délia Tétreault.

Mond'Ami, its goals and its concerns seem an interesting subject on which to speak this year as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of this organization. Yet how can we speak of the present and the future without at least briefly calling to mind its history? How can we speak of the work accomplished by Mond'Ami without referring to the efforts of the M.I.C. Sisters, even before the inception of Mond'Ami, to give the children a heart without boundaries?

A HISTORY MARKED BY OPENNESS

The Holy Childhood was given a new start in Canada as early as 1910 by Délia Tétreault. This Work showed in many respects in our country a characteristic openness. I shall mention only two manifestations of this that challenged me more especially. First of all, openness to the world. Indeed, the Holy Childhood and the presence of missionary witnesses, the M.I.C. Sisters in particular, enabled the children of that time to open up to the world, to

hear for the first time about far-away and foreign lands and about the people who devoted themselves there.



Anne-Marie Lavoie
National Secretary, Mond'Ami

Then, openness to the evolution of society. One only needs to see how, in the 60's, the Holy Childhood became *l'Enfance Missionnaire* and how it was able to accept merger with the Eucharistic Crusade (a work of the Jesuits), which, through a similar process, had become *Jeunesse en marche* (Youth on a Journey). In a social context that leaned toward secularization, why duplicate the output of energy to propose similar actions to the same children? Why not work together, Jesuits and M.I.C.s? These questions and many others were asked at the beginning of the 70's. It took courage to look beyond one's own work and to accept losing a little identity to gain new unity.

With the passing of time, this step seems to me quite valuable and it accounts today for the specificity and unity of Mond'Ami. Since 1973, Mond'Ami continues, in fact, to evolve and to work on the basis of the objectives inherited from the two founding works: openness to the world and solidarity in action.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The originality of the work of Mond'Ami rests on these two fundamental objectives. Twenty-five years ago, the world represented things and people that were foreign, exotic. Today, the same world fills the everyday life of the children. Just think of breakfast, where bananas, kiwis, chocolate milk and coffee are commonplace foods; or else, of the friends of all origins, of the multi-ethnic classes, of the neighbourhoods of our large cities where people from every country, language and religion live, and finally, of television, where the wars and disasters of the world are shown as well as programs on the different cultures, on travel, etc.

In this context, awakening the children to the world means enabling them to discover the richness of diversity and to develop a receptive attitude towards it. It also means enabling them to get in touch with what happens elsewhere starting with their own daily lives, their joys, their problems and their successes.

In our most interdependent world, in which the many forms of electronic media are superimposed on mass communication and in which one can instantly find out everything about a situation, it seems utterly important and relevant to develop a sense of solidarity because it somehow sets limits on speed. It bids one to take a look, to stop and understand, for solidarity means taking the other person into account, being mindful of who he or she is. To educate children in solidarity means, therefore, to help them develop an attitude of respect for and cooperation with their brothers and sisters at home and abroad; it means to teach them to know and love these brothers and sisters.

A PLACE FOR LIVING

It is the desire of *Mond'Ami* to be present in those places where children are gathered. Of course in the school, where most of their activities take place: either at an event to open the new school year, with the whole school attending, or in pastoral activities carried out according to an original theme

aimed at raising missionary awareness, or as part of a sharing project that allows the children to discover those of other countries, or else in small groups of children wishing to explore in greater depth the subject of solidarity and encounter with other people.

Mond'Ami also has a place in the parishes, which are trying harder and harder to find a way of integrating the children. In this pastoral setting, *Mond'Ami* is mainly present in children's clubs, but also as part of celebrations or of the follow-up of some of the Sacraments of Christian initiation.

RELEVANCE FOR TODAY

As the world of education becomes more and more secular and a polarization of deeply held opinions develops, what

does *Mond'Ami* propose? Can we still speak of mission activity in the school? How can we explain the presence of *Mond'Ami* in more than 1200 schools in Quebec, Ontario, the Maritimes and a few French-speaking

Photo: M.I.C., Canada



A meeting
with missionaries -
Silfane Joseph, M.I.C. and
Anne-Marie Parent, M.I.C.



Mond'Ami poster for schoolyear 1998-99

communities of Western Canada?

First of all, the joint planning that goes into the choice of themes gives rise to a reflection on the current needs of children and on the means to be taken to reach them in those needs. For example, in the year that is now ending, we had chosen to work on self-esteem, which is so necessary to reach out to others more effectively. The theme, developed through a circus, was: *Follow your inspiration ... The world is waiting for you!* The circus, then, was a means to promote both self-esteem and cooperation. In the coming year, we shall suggest that the children become the makers of their own history. They will be made aware that they have power over their own lives and that certain attitudes they adopt and

certain choices they make can transform their lives and build a better world. Thus, using stories and narratives, the theme will be: *Join the course of history ... Write about your hopes!*

We are convinced that missionary activity cannot be carried out today among children in the same way as it was 15 or 20 years ago, no more than it is carried out in the same way in the Church or in society. However, the concerns and objectives of *Mond'Ami* are still relevant today. *Mond'Ami* strives to promote the common values of children of different cultures or religions. By proposing values such as respect, peace and solidarity and by allowing the children to discover how their Christian faith is lived out in their own actions and concerns, we

believe that *Mond'Ami* contributes to their full development.

A GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE

No doubt, this is a risky glance, even if we are not trying to play prophet or to tell fortunes. Chances are, the objectives as well as the need to present animation tools that are close to the children's reality will remain the same, no matter how different the times may be. The question is: will *Mond'Ami* preserve its capacity for openness and adaptation, which was so characteristic of the work of Délia Tétreault? By always keeping children and service at the center of its concerns, *Mond'Ami* will maintain its role in the Church and in society as an organization aiming at the missionary education of children. □

175 YEARS YOUNG!

BY ÉLIETTE GAGNON, M.I.C.

From May '97 to May '98, the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith is celebrating 175 years of existence. This event is the occasion for nationwide celebrations in the 144 countries where it exists. It is an opportunity to relive the adventure of Pauline-Marie Jaricot, foundress of the organization, and those of the missionaries, both past and present. Délia Tétreault, our Foundress, ranks among the pioneers of the Work's activity in Canada. Éliette Gagnon, M.I.C., retraces this amazing history and gives us an insight of a few chapters of the M.I.C. life.

Its name may seem somewhat old-fashioned, but its heart is not. The Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith celebrates with joy and renewed vitality its 175th year. How can we not *join the party*? This celebration is, in a small way, also mine, and in a bigger way, it is ours as Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception!

IN A SMALL WAY, THIS CELEBRATION IS "MINE"

Indeed, from 1991 to 1997, the Church entrusted me with the Service of Mission Animation at the *Centre national de la Propagation de la Foi*. Those were years of grace and fulfilment that *I treasure and ponder in my heart*. Somewhat disoriented after twenty-five years of mission in Cuba, I quickly came to appreciate the great gift offered me: the wind blowing from abroad, the unlimited horizons, the universal communion, the teamwork with a wonderful staff and great diocesan

directors. In short, the actualization of my M.I.C. vocation in a worldwide outreach.



Venerable Pauline-Marie Jaricot
(1799-1862)

What I saw and heard, what I experienced during my service at the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, was already present in the mustard seed sown in France, in 1822, by its ardent foundress, Pauline-Marie Jaricot. As a woman, a young woman with a universal outlook, Pauline-Marie Jaricot envisioned great things and her gaze reached far and deep. Not only did she see the missions of France, she saw those of the *entire world*! Not only did she see the priests and religious, she saw the baptized *everywhere* and of every walk of life!

Jesus came to reveal a different way of living, of loving and of being happy: Good News that every human being has the *right to know* (R.M. 8). This

truth, which is better understood today, was already for Pauline-Marie Jaricot a deep and overwhelming conviction. She devoted all her strength to making it a constant ingredient of the *prayer* of Christians and a stimulus to *solidarity* with the sister-Churches for the evangelization and life of the world. Some are willing to give without loving, but no one can love without giving. Hence the importance for Pauline to encourage mission animation.

Financially speaking, she suggested simple ways in keeping with her times: one penny a week for the working women of Lyons, whom she organized into groups of ten, at first, and then of one hundred. The idea was contagious. Just as the drops of water running toward the ocean explain its immensity, thus the *widows' mites* pouring out of changed hearts gradually evolved into a massive trend of sharing with the Churches and the poor of all five continents. This trend is still ongoing today. I have witnessed it myself with great emotion, especially on World Mission Sunday and on my animation tours in various dioceses.

IT IS ALSO "OUR" CELEBRATION AS MISSIONARIES OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Who has not known or heard of the *Sisters who used to collect donations to help Chinese babies*? Many people recognize, even today, the values of openness, faith, life and commitment instilled in their hearts as children by the Holy Childhood. It was precisely the success of this Work, even during the years of World War I, that prompted Bishop Paul Bruchési of Montreal to also entrust to our Institute that of the Propagation of the Faith. This was in 1918. The organization fared poorly; it was little known even by those who gave alms to it. The situation was the same in the Archdiocese of Quebec. *The Association of the Propagation of the Faith is practically unknown in almost half of our parishes.* (Cardinal L. N. Bégin, November 1922).



Having been responsible of the Service of Animation for the Propagation of the Faith, Sr. Éliette is now in Cochabamba, Bolivia, preparing formators to the religious life.



Lucette Gilbert, M.I.C., National Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Haiti, has relaunched missionary animation in the dioceses.

This was an enormous task of universal scope. Délia Tétreault, however, had seen many others. Had not the Church given her, ten years earlier, *the whole world as her field of apostolate*? She accepted to take up the challenge. She began by personally visiting most of the bishops of Quebec to interest them in the Work. Meanwhile, the Missionaries she had formed went out to hundreds of parishes and colleges, held numerous meetings with the most diverse groups and raised up a small army of volunteers (designated in those days as *zélateurs, zélatrices*) whose task was to feed the missionary fire in their communities through prayer, information and sharing. Two unexpected events occurred, which providentially confirmed the intuitions of the foundress and awakened the whole Church: the publication, in 1919, of the encyclical *Maximum Illud*, a strike of the gong officially inaugurating the era of cooperation of all Christendom in the universal mission, and, in 1922, the promotion of the Propagation of the Faith to the rank of Pontifical Society for all the faithful of the world.

With renewed fervour, Délia Tétreault and her Sisters (several of whom are still living to attest this) continued striving to raise missionary awareness among the people. Judging by the results of the *mission drives*, one of the dreams of the foundress came true: to resurrect the Work of the Propagation of the Faith in French-speaking Canada. She often used to say: *Is it not fair that Canada should pay her debt of gratitude to the Church for the faith she received because of the zeal of the missionaries?*

After the Second Vatican Council, the concept of universal mission changed; our bishops are increasingly assuming responsibility for it and a growing number of the laity are making a positive commitment to the mission. As a result, the practice of mission animation must be readjusted accordingly. As daughters of the Church enriched by a growing international membership and an almost century-old experience, we want to continue, with new means, to cooperate with the Work that has been so dear to the Institute from its very origins. To the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith we wish a happy 175th anniversary and an ever-renewed youth in the service of the *one Mission*! □

ANCIENT ROOTS, YOUNG SHOOTS

BY ANTOINETTE CASTONGUAY, M.I.C.

In the Philippines, mission animation is on the roll! Children and adults alike enthusiastically get involved in their mission to share the Good News. Where does a surge of missionary dynamism such as this come from?

The telephone rings. Sister! The whole High School of Holy Cross College of Davao wants to attend the SPOF Convention. We heard that only 100 delegates from each school could participate. What if 1,300 students want to go? Please Sister, allow us all to join the group!

What a gush of missionary dynamism among the youth of the Archdiocese of Davao, Philippines! A huge gathering of young people from ten Catholic High Schools was convened to intensify their involvement in the work of evangelization. This collaboration is brought about through their commitment as members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (SPOF).

HOW OPEN UP TO MISSION?

Some seven years ago, an M.I.C. Mission Animation team launched a project to raise the mission awareness and commitment destined to Catholic students in the Mission of Christ. Three Sisters were appointed to form an international team. This team would be available to offer varied activities to the youth: talks, sessions, recollections and seminars on their responsibility to share their faith.

The M.I.C. team consisting of Sr. Angelita Villarin, Filipina, Sr. Atsuko Sagara, Japanese and Sr. Antoinette Castonguay, Canadian, offers information and formation to adults as well as to students. After five years of intense involvement, a Mission Education Committee was set up. In the Archdiocese of Davao, the committee



A missionary animation team (l. to r.): Atsuko Sagara, M.I.C., Sr. Jacinta, Antoinette Castonguay, M.I.C., Fr. Lumagod



comprises a concerted group formed of religious and lay persons whose goal is to promote and support the Pontifical Mission Societies, particularly the Holy Childhood Association (HCA) and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

A MISSION AWARENESS COMMITTEE! WHY?

Priority is given to the youth. Religion coordinators of each school meet at the beginning of each school year to plan the activities of the year. They participate in two other meetings during the year to plan the annual diocesan conventions of the SPOF and of the HCA. Then our M.I.C. Mission Team oversees the follow-up and the evaluation of the activities carried out by these Pontifical Mission Societies.

Mission education is maintained through visits of missionaries, specially by those on home leave. Audio-visual presentations and teaching modules are also available to help the students concretize their

solidarity with less privileged children and with missionaries. The adults and youth of age 14 and above are invited to become members of the SPOF. The younger children are introduced to the HCA. Each of these organizations has its own annual convention. The themes of the convention are highlighted by means of activities such as liturgical missionary celebrations, pantomimes, interpretative dances, games and contests.

Young people are encouraged to open their hearts to the large family of God's children and we help them to understand that they have a role to play in sharing the Good News. They discover the value of prayer, of sacrifice and of showing concern for others. Conscious of the needs of other children in their country and across the world, they commit themselves to help and protect one another. At their recent convention, held in Manila in early January this year, the participants sent a telegram to support the global march against child labour. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, a leading national newspaper, published the message of our young missionaries. How Délia Tétreault must rejoice, she who knew very well how to awaken the missionary spirit in millions of Canadian children! Her prophetic dream of children throughout the world singing together their joy is realized here and now.

WE GATHER THE FRUITS

Our foundress effectively reached out as well to adults to involve them in the Mission. Without studies in strategic planning, Délia's farsightedness envisioned long-term goals and means of effective mission awareness. She inspires our missionary animation project today.

The commitment of our laity in the Church is transforming ecclesial life, writes John Paul II in Redemptoris Missio. We are reaping the fruits. The Filipino people no longer limit themselves to their own parish. They are messengers of the Gospel wherever they go, whether at the local radio station or at the journalist's desk, as community faith leaders or volunteers with the tribal minorities and even as overseas contractual workers. We witness, this year, the rapid increase in number of Filipino missionaries sent to other countries! The Philippines now ranks as the seventh largest mission-sending nation having 981 religious sisters, 358 priests and brothers present in

83 countries. Add to this the one million overseas workers who live their faith in difficult conditions around the world. Indeed, a fresh breeze from the Holy Spirit blows over our Christian islands. There is also, in the country, the welcomed presence of lay volunteers from abroad. We embrace all this mission involvement as part of our missionary animation project and we admire the unselfish

devotedness of the faithful who participate in the mission of Christ. It is truly comforting to observe that ancient roots bud forth, producing young shoots and that a new springtime of Christianity has arrived! □



Contributing one's talents at the Holy Childhood convention in Mati

The convention is a time of intense mission animation.



Photos: M.I.C., Philippines

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

MAY 1998

May young people be prepared to accept a lifelong missionary vocation.

JUNE 1998

May the whole Church recognize and invoke the Holy Spirit as the principal agent of the new evangelization.



DOLORÈS ST-CYR, M.I.C.
From Coleraine,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Peru
in January 1998.



DORIS TWYMAN, M.I.C.
From La Tuque,
Diocese of Trois-Rivières.
Returned to Malawi
in January 1998.



MADELEINE ALARIE, M.I.C.
From St-Fidèle,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Haiti
in January 1998.



PAULINE BRODEUR, M.I.C.
From Ste-Théodosie,
Diocese of St-Jean-Longueuil.
Returned to Zambia
in February 1998.



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

WITNESSES OF THE GOSPEL, IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORLD!



AGNÈS BOUCHARD, M.I.C.
From Petite-Rivière-St-François,
Diocese of Québec.
Returned to Peru in February 1998,
after working in Cuba.



DENISE BOURGEOIS, M.I.C.
From St-Ours,
Diocese of St-Hyacinthe.
Left for Cuba in March 1998,
after working in Madagascar.



LETICIA DOTOLLO, M.I.C.
From Toril,
Diocese of Davao, Philippines.
Returned to Bolivia
in February 1998.

Knowing How to Give... and also How to Receive

BY SARA OLGA PÉREZ, M.I.C.

The mission situation in Cuba is unique in the Latin American continent. There are 17 Cuban M.I.C. Sisters. Five young women are in the formation stage to become members of our Community. How can the missionary dimension of M.I.C. life be expressed? Is it possible to speak of mission animation? To cooperate in the universal mission, the Churches of the world are called not only to give, but also to receive. Sr. Sara Olga Pérez shows us how the Cuban Church lives this partnership.

Dear Céline,

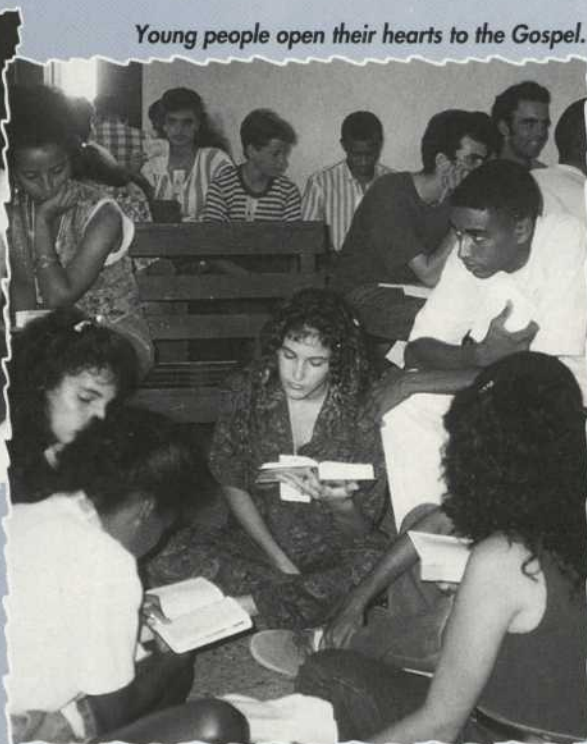
Is it possible to speak of mission animation in Cuba? My answer is an unhesitating YES, and to justify it, I invite you to look at our reality, keeping in mind that mission animation is essentially the work of the Holy Spirit. Its purpose is to make Christians more and more aware of the gratuitousness, universality and beauty of Salvation in Jesus Christ, and at the same time, to incite them to commit themselves to the universal mission of the Church. How can we not commit ourselves to bringing the Gospel to our brothers and sisters of the whole world once we have experienced this salvation?

For a long time, our Church lived confined within the walls of its temples, sharing the Gospel and the Eucharist in very small groups of believers. These communities, gathered in the name of the Lord, were afraid to open their doors and windows. Yet they nourished in their hearts the desire to receive the Word of God, to be identified with their Lord and to be a living presence among their people. In the last few years, however, and in this Marxist-Leninist environment, our Church has been experiencing a great awakening of faith. This happened with very little help in terms of personnel and with no other means of evangelization but faith in the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the here and now, and the Word of God as a source of life and a driving force for mission.

Sharing generously what we have received has always been one of our main cultural traits. The same is true in the context of faith. The people - children, youth, adults - who receive the Gospel message, immediately share with their own family,



Sr. Sara Olga is in charge of the Pastoral Coordination Department, Conference of Bishops of Cuba.

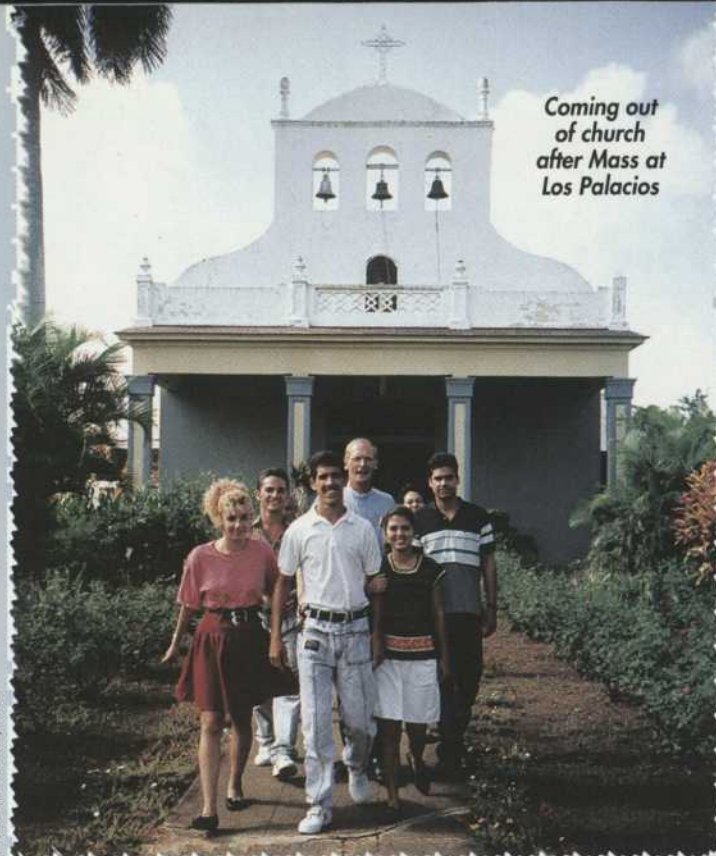


Young people open their hearts to the Gospel.

neighbours, work or study companions. They gave the confidence, joy and solidarity which are the fruit of their encounter with God. Their witness, which has long been a silent one, has been a conscience awakener. It has been a meaningful proclamation of the God of Life in the midst of our Leninist reality and this is precisely what gave credibility to our Church.

To cooperate in the mission not only means giving, but also being able to receive: all particular Churches, whether young or old, are called to give and to receive for the universal mission, and none of them must withdraw into itself, John Paul II reminds us. (R.M. 85) Our Church has received and continues to receive much help from sister Churches. The foreign missionaries have

given us considerable help and I especially refer to those who stayed with us in 1961 after the massive exodus and expulsion of priests and religious sisters. Their life of faith simply shared, their audacity in searching for new ways, their hope against all odds, have spurred on our faith, strengthened us in difficult times and challenged our Christian commitment. Numerous vocations to the priesthood and to the religious and missionary life have risen from the witness of their lives consecrated to God and to His People. Their vision has reached far into the future; not only did they commit themselves to the evangelical mission of the Church, they also provided for their succession. Their proclamation of the Message has become an invitation to others to commit themselves to the mission.



**Coming out
of church
after Mass at
Los Palacios**

In Cuba, there are still many women and men who hunger for God; this is why we have a duty to proclaim Salvation in Jesus Christ to them. This whole Island of ours is mission land. Our Church - faithful to her Lord - never ceases to promote the new evangelization radiating from the living and dynamic communities which are becoming, in every way, instruments of liberation that the Word of Life may be received. Here and beyond our boundaries, the mission of the Church bears quite a challenge: a vast number of people do not know Christ and His Gospel. We are aware of this as members of a local Church. We call on the Holy Spirit in our desire to respond better and better to the Word of God that keeps saying to us: Go and make disciples of all the nations. (Mt 28:19)

Now, I put the question to you: Is it possible to speak of mission animation in Cuba? It is your turn to tell me. I'd like to hear from you!

With Affection,
Sara Olga, M.I.C. □

LATIN AMERICA

A New Generation of Missionaries

BY MURIELLE DUBÉ, M.I.C.

Chile, Peru, Bolivia - countries where the Church is young, rich in generosity and discovering the foreign outreach of her mission. Hence the strong insistence on mission animation to bring Christians to witness to the Good News beyond their geographical, ethnic, cultural or economic boundaries. Murielle Dubé, M.I.C., presents us a few M.I.C. Sisters fully committed to this ministry of raising missionary awareness.

At the hour of mission for Latin America, a spring keeps gushing forth! It nourishes the roots of a living and pilgrim Church!

What is the source of such dynamism? Four short words of the Gospel: *Come and see* (Jn 1:39). *Go and proclaim* (Mt 28:19-20). Today as yesterday, these words give rise to an unbelievable life. The experience of a gratuitous love that gives full meaning to life. The call to participate in the proclamation of the most wonderful news: We are



**Gisèle Lachapelle, M.I.C. (2nd I.),
Nancy Campos, M.I.C., and Murielle Dubé, M.I.C.**

saved, we are loved ... There is hope! It is impossible to keep this Good News to oneself. This is what we M.I.C.s are trying to live, rooted in a continent of missionary hope, carrying in our hearts the project of a people - sons and daughters who sing the goodness of God. The dream of Délia our Foundress lives on: God has given us everything, even His own Son: *What better way to repay Him than to give Him children, chosen ones, who will also sing His goodness for centuries to come!*

PERU

Thérèse Beudet, M.I.C., who was a missionary in Cuba from 1951 to 1960, has been in Pucallpa, Peru, since 1968. In August, she will celebrate her golden jubilee of religious life. You would say she is at the age of retirement. Well, look again! Thérèse is the driving force, the catalyst of missionary awareness in the Vicariate of Pucallpa. Men and women, be they teachers, students, professionals, business people, children - all of them, it seems, have been touched by her flame. Their hearts embrace the world; their feet take them to other places; their wallets open up for almsgiving, in little or great amounts; their lips pour out prayers for the missions; their hands stretch out to others. The Church of Pucallpa, being mission-conscious, gives out of her poverty!

Five young women of Pucallpa have answered the call to mission and are living it with us M.I.C.s. Ederlina Torres del Aguila, a professed sister of perpetual vows, and Jessica Arévalo, a scholastic, are in Lima. Tania Diaz Vela, a scholastic, is a missionary in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Loyda Panduro, a postulant, is in Santiago, Chile, while Margarita Tuesta, a postulant, is in Tate, Peru.

BOLIVIA

At the Institute of Rural Education (IER) in Cochabamba, there is but one leitmotiv: to form native Quechua women so that they may then share with others what they have learned! Whether they become *sandal-wearing nurses*, Christian animators of small rural communities or promoters of women's rights and dignity, all of them are called to use their talents in the service of people in great need. Out of this fraternity totally devoted to the service of rural women, Anita Perron strives to build bridges of friendship with the university and college students of Cochabamba. Beyond the cultural and social differences, a new world of solidarity and fraternity is beginning to emerge. Women and young people are the protagonists of that world; they are the missionaries of today and of tomorrow!

Nancy Paz Rivero, M.I.C., originally from Santa Cruz, works at the IER, in a totally different cultural milieu. Ana Torres Frontanilla studied at the IER before becoming an M.I.C. She is now in Haiti, in the name of the Church of Bolivia, happy to share the gift of her faith.



Photo: M.I.C., Chile

CHILE

This missionary doesn't wear sandals ... it is too cold! Yet, Gisèle Lachapelle has been a missionary in Ancud, Chiloe Island, Chile, since 1970. Twenty-six years in this country, serving quietly at the Bishop's office, in a ministry which she considers most valuable: the **Holy Childhood** and the **Youth Without Frontiers**. As in the story of *Tistou, the Green Thumbs*, the delicate touch of Sr. Gisèle opens the hearts of children and young people to the Good News of Jesus and to the needs of their brothers and sisters of the world, both near and far. A breath of life sweeps through! A group of young missionaries appears on the horizon! They



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

Missionary animation gives rise to missionary vocations.

gather at a parish mission in Pudahel, a poor area of Ancud. Carmen Gloria Cid and Sigrid Romy Yunge, for their part, will give a hand at the mission of Tate, in Peru. Under the guidance of Sr. Jeannine Boily and of the M.I.C. fraternity, these two women in their twenties in turn train other young women also wishing to transmit the dynamism of their faith. A fire is spreading! Life is flowing through! Bridges are being built! **A local Church experiences the dynamic reality of being sent on a mission!**

Two M.I.C. Sisters were born on the Island of Chiloe: Manuela Vélasquez, a missionary in Cuba for three years, and Nancy Campos, presently a missionary in Santiago. □

In the Garden of God

*Parting here on earth
foreshadows a
rendez-vous in eternity*

Délia Tétreault, M.I.C.

Sister Marguerite Bégin (Joseph-Octave)

Marguerite was born in St-Joseph-du-Lac, county of Lauzon, Quebec, on October 24, 1911. At the age of 20, she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, where she made her profession on February 11, 1934. She then worked at the promotion of our review, LE PRÉCURSEUR, and was later appointed receptionist at our Noviciate of Pont-Viau.



In 1944, a long career began for Sr. Marguerite as directress of closed retreats in Quebec City and in Outremont. To organize and run a retreat house in the 40's and 50's was not an easy task. She did it successfully and managed to create a congenial and prayerful atmosphere. She loved her contacts with the retreatants and discreetly accompanied and counselled the young women interested in the religious life, while respecting their freedom of choice. Another major part of her life was then devoted to the service of authority. She also served as local bursar for nearly 18 years. At a time when the religious life was undergoing renewal, she undertook the necessary formation required to adapt to the imposed changes.

Because of her frail health, Sr. Marguerite never went on missions outside the country, but she made an important and valuable contribution to the different projects of the Community in Canada. She fulfilled her task with serenity, discretion and remarkable attentive care. In 1989, after spending some time at the hospital, she retired at our house of Pont-Viau. Those were years of interiority in which she manifested her gratitude for the least service rendered to her. On January 10, 1998, at the age of 86, she surrendered her life to God.

Sister Émilienne Vézina (Saint-Amédée)

Émilienne was born in Quebec City, July 24, 1913. She made her profession in the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on August 5, 1935.



In 1936, she left for China. She was 23 years old. Her missionary career began in Suchow, where she taught music and singing to young women, several of whom had the desire to embrace the Catholic faith. From 1936 to 1949, she lived through the bombings of the war between China and Japan. She then experienced having to flee for her life and going from place to place. She endured the concentration camp for two years and the civil war between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists. She finally left Suchow. Six months later, she embarked for the Philippines. As a singing and music teacher, she directed for many years a music department that had several teachers and many students. She would go out to meet people, to sow the seed of the Good News and to pray with groups. After 20 years in the Philippines, she was assigned to Vancouver. She felt drawn to the most unfortunate and founded the Aurora Society for the rehabilitation of alcoholic women, an organization approved by the Ministry of Health.

Having returned to Montreal, Sr. Émilienne worked as a volunteer at the *Maison du Père*. Her involvement, her devotedness and her witness were most appreciated by both the staff and the homeless. Her entire missionary journey was really a word of God calling people to listen to the Word and to follow Jesus. The Lord received her in His home on the 28th of January 1998, at the age of 84 years, 66 of which she lived in religious life. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

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OFFICE OF THE DÉLIA TÉTREAULT CAUSE

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CASA PROVINCIAL

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HAITI:

MAISON PROVINCIALE (DELMAS)

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Kowloon, Hong Kong

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makes me penetrate
into the spirit of our vocation,
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is truly thanksgiving ...*

Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit, M.I.C.

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