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FRONT COVER:

A lotus flower in full bloom

Photo: Fokwangshan Buddhist Order

BACK COVER:

Interfaith symbols

provided by The Multifaith Calendar

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MISSIONARY INTENTIONS 1999

APRIL

That in Africa, so tried by tension and violence, the Church may accomplish her mission of reconciliation, brotherhood and peace.

MAY

That following the example of Mary and with her help, Christian parents may educate their children in deep faith which will open to apostolic and missionary commitment.

JUNE

That the Church in Macao may intensify her missionary service to the Chinese people.

New Heart, New Spirit!

Here comes a moment in life when we experience a change of heart and mind that opens us to new horizons. God keeps calling, drawing our attention and guiding us toward new paths. We are filled with wonder and expectation. This kind of openness dwells at the core of our enduring search for the truth of life and the love of God.

In this issue, we are privileged to present the sharings of certain friends who have felt deep within this rare blessing of the touch of God. For them, journeying in faith is an ongoing process of receiving and giving, of accepting and letting go, of searching for deeper communion with other people and the unseen God in whom they trust.

Our experience of *dialogue* as missionaries is rooted in daily life, in being part of the lives of people whom we respect and love. We are grateful to the writers of this issue for their generous contribution and especially for their vulnerability in allowing us to share their spiritual journey. Each one tells how wonderful is God's gift of faith. They express with awe and surprise the many blessings received - a much fuller appreciation of their loved ones and friends, a new look at things they so easily took for granted, a renewed vision of life they only dimly glimpsed before. They are not afraid to hear new ideas and to meet other people who convey beliefs and values that are different from their own. They are in no way threatened by diversity and plurality nor by questions that differ from their own or to which there seems to be no answer. Their lived experiences and encounters with others deepen their faith in God, their understanding of themselves and of their own culture.

All around us, springtime is at its best. Let us take heed of its vibrant invitation and that of the coming feast of Pentecost to be more attentive to God's abiding presence in our own life and to remain attuned to the promptings of His Spirit. May we become more receptive to the treasure of God's love, poured out profusely into emptied and readied hearts.

Ma. Anthea Raso, mic

YOU SHALL BE A MISSIONARY...

By Pierre Babin, O.M.I.

The world changes. We also change. We adjust to a new way of thinking and living created by the progress of science and technology. Pierre Babin, a French priest and world renowned expert in communications, tells us how missionaries also develop new ways of transmitting the Christian message.

Being a missionary to preach the Good News, to implant the Church or even to promote *development* in foreign lands, isn't this an outdated concept? No, the missionary vocation is not extinguished; what has changed is only the image of it and the manner in which it is carried out.

Missioned by Whom ?

Through a deep personal inspiration in which they recognize the Lord's call, missionaries are sent for tasks that are beyond them and that respond to the urgent needs of the times.

What is specific of missionaries is that they are sent on concrete missions, to accomplish tasks that are, in some respects, ideal, uncommon, even heroic... However, those uncommon tasks that once defined the mission, are no longer relevant: we no longer are rich people going to the poor, nor developed people reaching out to primitive nations; much less are we sages going to barbarians, not even Christians going out among pagans. Without even mentioning the work done in the local Churches, many of those tasks are performed by governments, by world policies and economic structures, by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and through the internet, the radio and the television. Besides, African and Asian people have their own intelligence, their own development, their own religion, and their wisdom is often superior to ours...

The specific task of missionaries is different: it is, above all, a spiritual and evangelical task. Starting from the aspirations of our day, missionaries must thus courageously open new roads towards the future by responding to the human and spiritual needs that arise from the change in civilization. They must be the spiritual heralds of the new humanity designed by Christ.



Missioned for What Purpose ?

What are missionaries sent for? To contribute to the implementation of God's plan. Using technological means available today and current trends towards globalization, it is God's plan to unite the world in the diversity of peoples, religions and individual vocations. Our mission is to make humanity a single flower for the Glory of God. Not to convert people, but to bring them together in unity. This mission is as noble and at least as heroic as that of ancient times, for it openly combats national and religious racism, cultural prejudice and worldwide injustice. It counteracts among Christians the tendency to hold on selfishly to set ways, a result of consumerism, and it stands up against the fear generated by the old traditions.

Filled with the strength of the Spirit of Christ, the new missionary looks forward - not to go to foreign lands - but to break through geographic frontiers everywhere and through the barriers of race, religion and money: *The whole world is my family*, as stated before by Pope John XXIII.



*Learning to see the world as one big family.
Holy Childhood, Brazil*

*Sharing daily life with the people in their own
milieu. Elizabeth Relacion, M.I.C., Philippines*

*Building world unity among people of different cultures and religion.
Thérèse LeBlanc, M.I.C., Hong Kong.*



Photos: M.I.C.

The new missionary wants to build, not churches of stone, but the mystical body of Christ, the mystical network of those who share the same spirit of respect and love.

He wants to proclaim that true religion is within each human being.

He wants to reveal the inner voice which presides over the destiny and freedom of each one.

He wants to alert everyone to the vibrant presence of God deep within oneself.

He witnesses to the fact that the inner powers of each one are unlimited and that, with faith, and with more faith, one can move the mountains of impossibility.

By the courage and audacity of his life, and by refusing the platitudes and indoctrination of advertising, he applies to the new technologies the magic of a mystical development.

His key words are not domination, but integration; not exclusion, but dialogue.

By his compassion and his broadminded outlook, he shows that everyone has a right to his own timing and his own mistakes, for unlimited is the mercy of the Lord who inspires him.

Lastly, he proclaims and bears witness to human love as the way to fulfillment.

*You shall be a missionary...
You shall go out with the
Buddhists and the Moslems.
By rubbing shoulders with one
another, you shall become
saints...
Together you shall make God's
sun shine on all created
beings.
You shall bless all creation.
You shall build peace and
world unity.
This, says God, is the mission I
entrust to you.
You shall be a missionary... □*

We invented the tools to break down barriers, but we haven't been prepared for the virtues of globalization: pluralistic dialogue, unity in diversity, mutual stimulation instead of competition, sharing instead of indefinite growth, awareness and respect of those from other places. This is where we should focus our activity as communicators. Communicators who share the plan revealed by Jesus Christ, that of uniting in a single family all the scattered children of God. Communion is our future; it is up to us to make globalization the way to that future. *Pierre Babin*

Interfaith Dialogue in

By Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C.

Taiwan 1998. An unusual move to facilitate a more intense dialogue between Buddhists and Catholics: a Buddhist monk organised in Taipei a one-week programme of immersion in the Catholic Church for graduating students of his monastery. Sr. Gabrielle Drouin had the good fortune of living this experience with Buddhist nuns. She tells the story.



Buddhist nuns in the company of Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C. (1st l.) and Theresa Chang, M.I.C.

Yuan-Kuang College is a monastery where, in addition to the academic knowledge usually imparted elsewhere, the Buddhist philosophy is taught as well as initiation in meditation and Buddhist chanting, austere living, etc. The College has a good reputation and gives renewed interest to the traditional Chinese

methods of liberation of the soul. The courses are usually spread over a period of three years, but can be prolonged depending on the degree of knowledge already attained or desired. All those years of formation are lived in a monastic ambience. The College currently has more than 300 students, most of whom are already *ordained* members of other smaller monasteries. A few years ago, some twenty Jesuits involved in interfaith dialogue in Southeast Asia, participated in a meeting held at the Buddhist College of Yuan-Kuang. This encounter was a positive experience and strengthened the bonds of friendship between Jesuits and Buddhists.

Different religious congregations joined the movement and accepted to accompany the graduating students on their visits to the monasteries and to various Catholic charitable organizations.

Their first encounter took place at the Central Building, where ecumenical groups usually meet. A Sister of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul greeted the students and gave them a brief overview of the Christian faith and of the organization of the Church. After having their lunch in complete silence, the students were divided into groups of four or five and introduced to the persons who were to accompany them on their visits. This is how I spent a week with four nuns ranging in age from 24 to 32 years. This was during the Easter season. The young women had heard about Easter since a long time, but without giving it too much attention. Now, however, this word gave rise to many questions. During their visit to the Carmelites, one of the Sisters answered all their questions tactfully and respectfully, explaining to them the great mysteries of the Christian faith, especially that of Easter. The encounter at Carmel was the longest of all: one day and a half. The experience ended with a delightful concert alternately featuring Buddhist and

Last April, the Buddhist Master Ju-Wu, rector of the College, knowing the importance of promoting further dialogue between religions, took an unprecedented step: he gave his future graduates - 29 women and 3 men - the chance to experience a one-week immersion in the Catholic Church. The dioceses of Taiwan responded favourably to this proposal.



Buddhist nuns and a group of lay missionaries of Taiwan with Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C. (at center) and Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C. (3rd row, r.)

Taiwan

Gregorian chants. The Buddhist nuns were extremely pleased with this experience. They mentioned it several times in the days that followed. They had found among the Carmelites a certain affinity with their own simple life detached from the lures of life in a worldly environment.

On the days we spent together, we met various groups involved in the Church and visited 15 different Catholic centres: schools, orphanages, homes for the mentally deficient and for the elderly, factories, etc. Everywhere they met a warm and respectful reception. They discovered that the work done in these different projects demonstrates how much Catholics show marked concern about helping others, especially the most disadvantaged.

These Buddhist nuns know and love the historic Jesus as the one who gave himself completely to help others. During our informal exchanges, I was invited to share on my faith. I spoke about Jesus and of the encounter with God, the Eternal One, who brings us to the truth. This experience proved quite enriching for me. Until then, I had mostly met people of the so-called *popular religion*. I

had never been in contact for such a period of time with adherents of *pure Buddhism*. I had followed sessions and read books, but these concepts had remained in the realm of cerebral knowledge. Rubbing shoulders with Buddhist nuns for seven days was something totally different. What struck me, at first, was their perfect discipline and the absence of anything superfluous; then, their fervour and the amount of time they spent in recollection and in meditation in the posture of the Buddha: immobility of the whole body and complete silence. Their great respect of nature and of all life pleased me immensely.

What was especially new to me was their concept of the Absolute. For them, there is no Creator God as in Christianity and many other non-Christian religions. There is no room for God in their vision of the world. This doesn't mean that they are atheists. It simply means that the idea of God is foreign to them. They cannot conceive that God, if he exists, can be named, for naming him would be limiting him to concepts. They search for spiritual illumination, and for detachment and liberation in which they will eventually rid themselves of all their desires. Buddhism is a Way on which they walk all along their lives. They walk towards a form of illumination, Nirvana, but not towards a personal God who personally loves his creation and each human being.

Ever since this event, understanding and communion continue to deepen among us. I attended their graduation. It was like a beautiful liturgy. I was thinking: *Buddhism also brings a message to our world today. The human values that it conveys are in harmony with those of Christianity. I find it important to know more about this religion which is flourishing in Taiwan.* □

Fr. Albert Poulet-Mathis, S.J., accompanied the group. Executive secretary of the National Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, Fr. Poulet-Mathis is also the coordinator of the Commission for Interfaith Dialogue of the Jesuit Conferences in East Asia and Oceania (JCEAO).

In China, the effort to achieve mutual understanding between the Catholic Church and Buddhism has been taking place for a long time. Back in the 40's, to initiate dialogue among Protestants, Buddhists and Moslems, Archbishop Paul Yupin of Nanking founded the *Chinese Interfaith Friendship Association*.

In 1973, to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among the leaders of the seven religions officially recognized by the government of Taiwan, Bishop Lo-Kuang formed in Taipei, the *Chinese Association for Interfaith Dialogue*. Since then, numerous commissions and associations were formed and have become very active. The quest for Christian unity and the promotion of interfaith dialogue have become two inseparable facets of a single task. In this context, it goes without saying that interfaith meetings are desired and quite frequent, though results are not immediately tangible.

Albert Poulet-Mathis, S.J.



Gestures of welcome and sharing. Eulalia Loreto, M.I.C., Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C. and their guests pray together before mealtime.

JOURNEYING IN FAITH

By Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

In her 25 years in Japan, Sr. Louisa Nicole has seen people opening up to the Gospel and undertaking a long journey of faith. In a culture steeped in Shintoism and Buddhism, that anyone would do this is an intriguing fact. She tells us how this happens.

Since 1926, the St. Francis Xavier School (*Xaverio*) of Koriyama, Japan, has been a place of interfaith dialogue and evangelization. Clearly identified as a Catholic institution, *Xaverio* has created solid bonds of friendship and fidelity with a society that is strongly attached to Shintoism and Buddhism. The school also explicitly proposes Gospel values and catechetical teaching is offered to the children and their parents. Both parents and teachers respect this commitment. Furthermore, they agree to impart to the children the Christian values we promote. Over the years, a number of people have undertaken a journey of faith and became Catholics. Two of them accepted to share their lived experiences in answer to the following questions:

What faith did you profess before becoming Catholics?

What led you toward Christianity?

How do you live your faith today?

We were Buddhists.

Mrs. Fukuzawa: *My husband and I were members of a Buddhist sect named Shingonshu. We claimed to be Buddhists without really knowing all the content of that faith. At any rate, there are no required practices. Actually, we had to belong to something if we wanted to have a funeral. For me, Buddhism is more of an atmosphere: prayers, especially at funerals, a visit to the Temple at the beginning of a new year to obtain blessings for myself and my loved ones. Usually, I adhere to the practices of my family circle and the prayer of petitions.*

Mrs. Fukuzawa, 45, is the wife of a physician. They have two daughters, one 16 years of age, and the other 6.

Mrs. Sato is 40 years old. Her husband is president of a small automobile sales and repair company. They have three children: two boys and an eight-year-old girl, their youngest.



Mrs. Sato: Every family contributes financially to the upkeep of the Temple in their locality, whether they are Buddhists or Shintoists. But I prefer to call myself a Buddhist while taking part in Shintoist festivities. I have a greater sense of belonging to the Temple when there is a funeral. For the rest, I go to the Temple on special occasions when I feel like it: on New Year's Day, at the birth of a child, and on the birthday of the little ones of

ages 3, 5 and 7. The children take part in public festivals. Of course, all these events are celebrated by the Shintoists, who took hold of all the pleasant sides of life, leaving to the Buddhists the somber aspects: ascetism, death, etc. Buddhism has little impact on my daily life except, perhaps, the little family altar on which I offer rice and water to the ancestors every morning and implore their protection and that of Buddha.

Our children led us to Christianity.

Mrs. Fukuzawa: When my oldest daughter was of age for Kindergarten, I deliberated on the choice of a school for her... I visited different schools and was still hesitant. I then chanced a visit to Xaverio School. Gisèle Lambert, M.I.C., was directress of the Kindergarten at that time. Although the registration period was over, she welcomed me very warmly and my daughter was able to join all the other children in April. Registering my child at Xaverio meant accepting that she be exposed to the God of Jesus Christ, whom the children were taught to know and pray to. I told myself, I know nothing about God... I should know at least as much about Him as my daughter, if I could only find out a little! And, an answer to my wish: the school was offering Bible and religion classes to us, mothers. I signed up right away for meetings led by Monique Cloutier, M.I.C. This was on May 4, 1986. I was setting out on a totally unforeseen journey.

Mrs. Sato: When my oldest son started Kindergarten, I had a 4-month-old baby. My son would come home and tell me about God the Father, and about Jesus and Mary. He would sometimes ask questions that I could not answer. I wished I were at least one step ahead of my son. This really bothered me and I mentioned it to a friend who was following classes with Agathe Bolduc, M.I.C. She said to me: But you can bring your baby... Come on! Take the classes! So, in September 1989, I joined Sister Agathe's group.

We had no plans to become Christians.

Mrs. Fukuzawa: It had never occurred to me to become a Christian. But as I journeyed with my religion group, I became aware of new values. I felt the support of a community and the love of God urging me and my companions to be more open to others. I was filled with a great desire, the desire to belong to this Christian community and to receive Baptism. How would my husband react to this? I decided to talk to him about it. Naturally, he was against the idea. My family is Buddhist... what kind of



The large Buddha of Kamakura at the time of cherry blossoms

Photo: Shinichi Marumo



Mrs. Fukuzawa and her daughter Seiko, on their baptism day

a funeral would we get? As Buddhists, the funeral is what matters the most for us.

My husband knew how much respect and esteem I had for Sister Monique. He already knew about the classes I followed. Sometimes, I would even tell him what I had learned and we would discuss it. All this was fine and made me happy... was this not enough? He couldn't understand my desire to become a Christian. I was saddened and I talked about this to Sister Monique and to the Pastor of the parish, Reverend Michel Gariépy, O.P.. Both of them reassured me - Religion should not divide families. Live by your faith, and your witness will bear fruit in its own time and place. I was deeply overwhelmed by this great spirit of freedom. My desire for Baptism grew even stronger. As a wife and mother, I became radiant with joy and truly filled with hope.

One year later, in December, as I was pregnant with my second daughter, my husband invited me to a restaurant. In our hyperactive life, this was a rare occasion, but so greatly appreciated. The atmosphere led us to intimate conversation. My husband suddenly remarked: If I remember correctly, December is the time to apply for Baptism. Don't you want to be baptized this year? I answered, No, it is already too late. The ceremony of entrance for catechumens in the Church is over. He then asked, But can't they do something special for you... you wanted it so much! I was happy. I had lived with the certainty that my desire would one

day be realized, but this was sooner than I had anticipated. And he added: You may also have the children baptized. It is a good thing for them to have their mother's faith. This was beyond my wildest dreams! I couldn't have asked for such a favour. Since I had been journeying for seven years, I was admitted among the catechumens and baptized at Easter of 1993 along with my oldest child and the one I was carrying. Her official Baptism took place after she was born. My husband accompanied us to Church on these two occasions. What a blessing!

Mrs. Sato: When Sister Agathe went to Canada, Sister Theresia Kofuji, who had replaced her for the religion class, asked me if I would like to be baptized. And on the spur of the moment, I answered: Sure, I would like to be baptized, I want to be a Christian. - Then, talk to your husband about it, she said. To talk to my husband about it? He had no idea I was following these classes for this purpose... in fact, I wasn't; the reason I had started was to better understand my son and answer his questions. But, little by little, I realized that I was the one being saved by this teaching and by the new values I wanted to introduce in my life. A door to the world of faith had been opened to me. I was fascinated, as it were, by the love of God.

I talked to my husband about it. And the children? I ventured to ask. I have two sons and a daughter. It is not unusual for a father to allow his daughter to be baptized, but not his sons, for they must preserve the family traditions in order to transmit them later. My husband answered: I believe it's a good thing to believe in God at an early age... It was different for me, but I want my children to be able to relate to something solid that gives meaning to their lives. Yes, all three of them may be baptized with you. My emotion and gratitude were beyond description. I was so happy!

The way we express our faith...

Mrs. Fukuzawa: For me, there is but one God, but there are several roads leading to Him. Because my husband doesn't share my faith, I have to make a few concessions. For example, every year, we join my husband's family to welcome the New Year. On the 31st of December, we all go to the neighbouring Shintoist Temple to greet the New Year. At midnight, we make an offering, we give thanks for the past year and pray for health and prosperity for the year ahead. After the Baptism of my second daughter, my husband wanted her, as a Japanese citizen, to be also presented in the Temple. We celebrated the seventh birthday of my older daughter at Church, but following my husband's wish, the third and fifth birthdays of our second daughter were at the Temple. In my heart, I don't feel a division: both the Temple and the Church are given to us by the Lord as symbols of his presence. I can just as well pray to my God in a Buddhist or Shintoist Temple as in a Church. My husband and I fully agree on this point.

Mrs. Sato: My husband is a Xavier graduate. Is that why he is so understanding towards my way of practicing religion? He wanted our own children to receive the same



Sonoko, younger daughter of Mrs. Fukuzawa

education he did, and he believes as we do in one God who is close to us. At Christmas time, for instance, I am hardly ever home: I devote a lot of time at our Church to prepare Christmas activities for the children. My husband never finds fault with this; on the contrary, he says that is where I should be. If, on rare occasions, he suggests that we go to the Temple, I readily comply. He respects my faith and I observe with him our Japanese customs. I don't feel any conflict within myself in this regard.

Jesus Christ has changed our lives.

Mrs. Fukuzawa: Christianity has brought nothing but positive elements to my life. I continue going to the school every week for Bible sharing. In addition to being in touch with the Word of God, I feel the strength of the group journeying with me. All through the week I am challenged by the Word we shared. My vision of things has changed and I am more able to put things in perspective, to forgive, to give thanks. I now also open my mind to the universal aspect. There was a time when I gave little thought to my brothers and sisters of other continents.

Of course, those closer to me are also very important. During the flood that greatly damaged our medical clinic and its modern equipment last August, I saw that my husband was very affected. I found in my faith the strength to support him and to also comfort those around us. They called me Sunshine and thought that I was somewhat insensitive to the events. But it was not so. I wept bitterly in my heart. We could have made claims against the city or sued those who had sold us this plot of land, but the Lord told me in my heart that we must love one

another, especially in this time of trial. In fact, one day, I found myself thanking God for this experience which brought us closer together in the same hope.

Mrs. Sato: Personally, I tended to be depressed whenever I encountered some vexations or difficulties in relating with other people. Ever since I came to believe in God, I am convinced that all events contribute to my own growth and to the good of my family, and this is how I receive them. Trials now help me see reality in a new light and I am grateful to the Lord who fills me with His strength, His peace and His joy. My daily life has indeed become the venue of my surrender to the God who loves me and guides me.

This may be why I was able to accept my husband's illness with great serenity. For three days, he was between life and death and

his chances to survive were minimal. His doctor remarked, Only God can save him. This gave me great comfort and came to me as a surprise. It is rare to hear a Japanese doctor invoke the name of God. This one was very special, I thought. The next day at school, Sister Louisa said to me, Prayer alone can save him and my prayers are with you. This reminded me of what I had been told the previous day and I was truly comforted. I thus decided to leave everything in the hands of God. My husband is still alive; he is at home at complete rest. We had never spent so much time together since our wedding and the children are so happy to find their father at home when they return from school. I don't know how many more years he will live, but in my heart I feel that he is saved. The Lord is close to us and in this great trial, He is guiding and blessing us. I am prepared to accept whatever happens, in thanksgiving. □

Mrs. Sato's three children during the celebration for the 3-5-7 years of age



Young Christians on Mission Sunday. Among them are the children of Mrs. Fukuzawa and Mrs. Sato. Louisa Nicole, M.I.C. (last row, 2nd r.) and Estela del Bando, M.I.C. (last row, 1st r.), accompany them.



HERE IS THE
STORY OF
DÉLIA
TÉTREAULT,
A DAUGHTER
OF QUEBEC.

DÉLIA'S
HEART WAS
AS BIG AS
THE
WORLD!

DÉLIA
TÉTREAULT

PART III

The religious Community founded by Délia Tétreault was named the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This Community is now in 14 countries and has more than 750 members of 17 different nationalities.

1916! Délia went out to meet the children in the schools of Montreal and suburbs. She told them about China, Japan, and Africa. Encouraged by Délia, the children got involved in projects that showed their friendship and their spirit of sharing. The Sisters of her Community participated in this wonderful initiative for the missions.

JESUS NEEDS CHILDREN
LIKE YOU TO BRING
HAPPINESS EVERY-
WHERE IN THE
WORLD.

With her companions, Délia opened retreat houses, schools, catechetical centres and even two hospitals for Oriental immigrants: the Chinese Hospital in Montreal and Mount Saint Joseph Hospital in Vancouver.



Délia continued to dream of founding a community of missionary priests for Canada. She mentioned this to Archbishop Bruchési: *If you want a seminary, tell the other Bishops of Quebec also and find priests for it...*

Délia worked very hard at this project: making plans, holding meetings, writing letters and praying...

One day, Father Adelmar Lapierre passed in front of the house. He was tired.

THIS
IS A CONVENT. I
WILL ASK IF I MAY
REST A LITTLE.



After many years of work, Délia was struck down with an illness. She was paralyzed. The life of her missionaries filled her heart.



MY
GOD, HOW GOOD
YOU ARE! I LOVE
YOU! THANK YOU...
THANK YOU!

On October 1, 1941, Délia entered
heaven of the Church. Her thanks
filled the hearts of her Sisters.



1920.
Délia launched
the first
Canadian
missionary
magazine,
LE PRECURSEUR.
In 1923,
she published an
English edition,
THE PRECURSOR.
M.I.C. Sisters
went
from door to door
to offer
the magazines.
Their visit
brought
comfort and joy
to the people.



Families were
filled with a
strong mis-
sionary spirit.



ENT, I
I MAY
TLE.

Délia
welcomed
him and
offered him a
cup of coffee.
She talked to
him about a
Canadian
foreign
mission
seminary.
Father
Lapierre was
filled with
enthusiasm.
One priest
had been
found to start
the seminary.



On February 2, 1921, the Bishops of Quebec founded the Foreign Mission seminary (*Prêtres des Missions Etrangères*) in Pont-Viau, Quebec. Délia's great dream had finally come true!



Délia died at the age of 76. She shines in the
r thanksgiving and missionary spirit live on in
her Sisters scattered in all parts of the earth.



Children
of all
countries
have
under-
stood the
message
of Délia.
They are
happy to
know that
God loves
them and
they work
for the
happiness
of other
children.





By
Christian
Beaulieu

Certain individuals communicate to us their desire to live life to the full. They inspire us to live generously and to help others. Where does such wholeness of being come from? Christian Beaulieu invites us to recognize and give thanks for the presence of God at the very heart of their life journey.

GENUINE

Something indefinable inspires these exceptional people.

After many mistakes during his wandering about, a young man was getting ready to start anew toward the future: in a different city, on a new job, and back to his studies. To support him in his new endeavour, in a rite of passage, he asked that members of his intimate circle lay their hands on him in prayer. During the prayer his father spoke: *My son, whatever happens to you in life, know that you are very important to your mother and me. We wanted you so much! We've always believed in your tremendous potential. Remember that you are worth more than what you do. Whether your life is successful or not, whether you become an important man or not, whether you remain in good health or not, whether you follow the ways we taught you or choose other ways, always remember how much we love you. Whatever happens later, be sure that we shall always be there for you. And even more so will God! You can always count on Him.* His mother seconded everyone of these words. The believers of this little community looked intently at the young man as if to say to him: You shall never be alone, never!

I was profoundly moved. What a grace this blessing was! What strength in this laying on of hands! I had the impression that we were all transmitting to him an incredible strength. We were giving him authority and power. We were increasing his energy and potential tenfold. Thus supported, this young man can move on, filled with confidence.

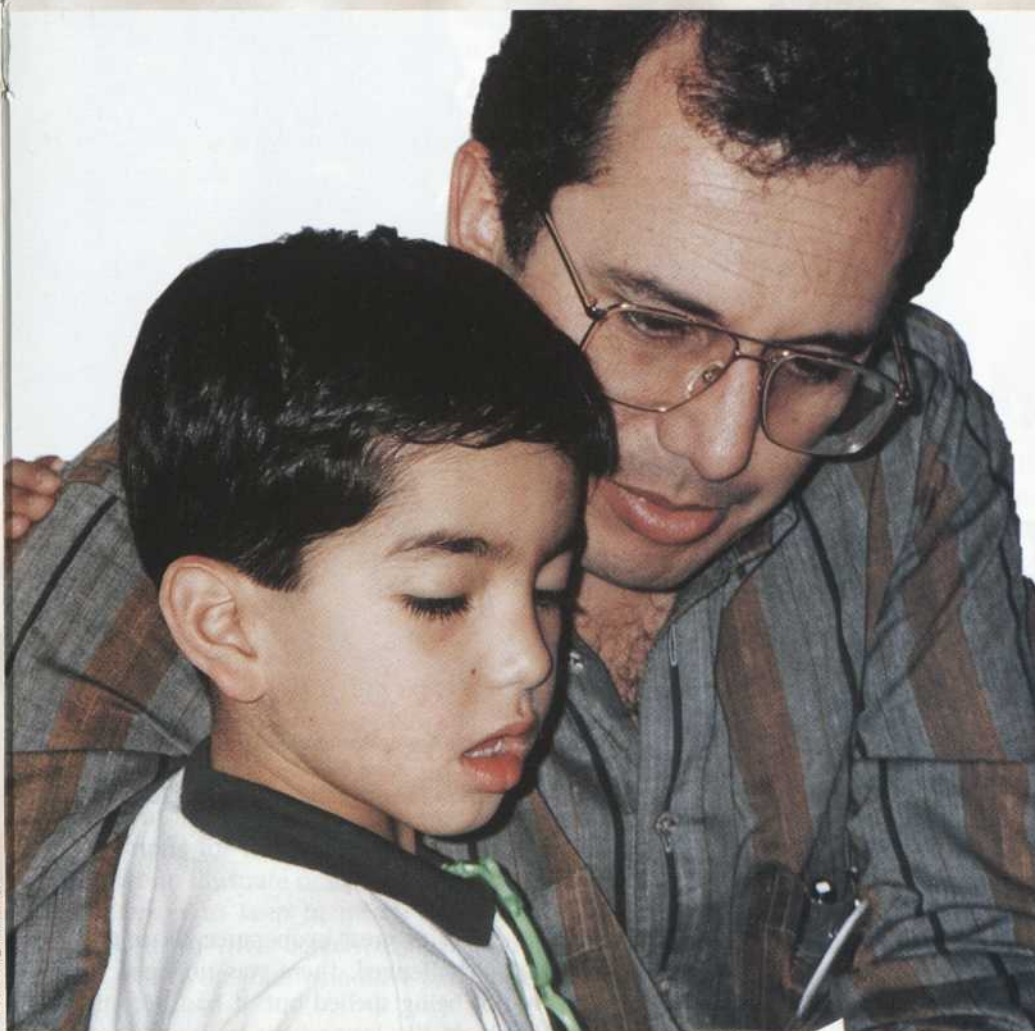
Let us think of persons around us who are witnesses, whose very existence is contagious. What happens in our life upon meeting such people whom we admire and whom we want to be? Their presence inspires us. At their side, it is impossible to remain mediocre or lukewarm. We come to believe in ourselves and to want to be better. With them, our dreams are realized and the impossible becomes possible.

What is this intangible, indefinable something that inspires these exceptional people? What then is this force that sustains their momentum? In their life, there is *something else* driving them, *something* irresistible, eternal... It is that very special *something* which makes all the difference. What is it? Failing the ability to define it exactly and express it clearly, is it possible at least to detect traces of it in their lives?

For example, after living together for many years, certain couples can easily draw up a long list of their respective imperfections. Yet, because of their mutual love, they acknowledge their beautiful and positive sides. But what keeps their union as fresh as youth? What is it in their relationship that does not die, but continually renews itself? Often, their only answer to such questions is an eloquent silence or a brightness in their intent gaze telling the unspeakable.

Notice how parents have a clear vision of and acknowledge

HUMAN BEINGS...



*What is the source of
this spiritual force that
sustains us?*

To understand this, one needs to go beyond or beneath, that is, deeper than what is observable and measurable in life. This abundance of life comes from Someone else greater who lives in their hearts. They live by His life, by His happiness, by His strength. They are true believers always marching onward, in a process of growth and becoming. Everything has to be invented as they go along. They strive to bring the best out of themselves and of their freedom. This is why they never give orders and scarcely ever offer advice. Indeed, how can one impose on others all the detailed itinerary of a successful life when one is always busy opening one's way to humanity and responding to new challenges?¹

Our own lived experiences have surely made us realize that we are indebted to significant persons in our life for what we are today. Because of that, we, in our own way, can reach out to others. We can, at an opportune time, assist others in taking risks, in taking hold of oneself so as to live generously. If only, because of us, people will believe in themselves and want to make of their lives something great! □

¹ Remi Parent, *Vivre reconcilié avec soi-même*, Éd. Paulines, 1998.

with great anxiety the weaknesses and possible failures of their children. Yet how could they explain the amazing strength of the bond that exists between them and their children... and, they know it, a bond that will always continue to exist in spite of all?

And the sick... Crushed by suffering that is, at times, unbearable, some among them may have every reason in the world to want to die. But those are the ones in whose company we find the desire to live. How can one be spiritually renewed by being with the chronically ill? How do people, seemingly so fragile, transmit to another so much courage and strength?

It is the same amazing thing with the poor. What a strange paradox! From such people who seem to be so vulnerable, so deprived of everything, comes a sort of contagious vitality which shakes up our sluggishness and reminds us of the inherent value of the person - someone with inalienable rights and dignity.

What about those militants who seem exhausted from all their combats and who nevertheless continue to struggle so that freedom and justice may transform our world? At what source do these exhausted people replenish their tenacity, and in turn, invite us to also commit ourselves?



Learning to Express One's Faith

By Marie-Paule Charbonneau, M.I.C.

Families celebrating the golden Jubilee of
Aline Quirion, M.I.C., incharge of
Family Catechesis in Peru and Chile for almost 20 years.



It is not an easy task to find the appropriate words to speak to one's child about God. In Chile, *Family Catechesis* helps parents and their children in this dialogue. Sr. Marie-Paule Charbonneau, who was deeply involved in this ministry for many years, highlights the dynamic experience.

Some time back in 1950, in a densely populated district of Santiago, Chile, a new form of religious dialogue humbly came into existence: family catechesis. It gradually spread throughout the country and even across the borders, to neighbouring countries. This form of catechesis fills a need of re-evangelization in a fast-changing society.

*Faith not being expressed
had become vague and inaccurate.*

Indeed, in Chile as in most countries with a long Christian tradition, faith and religion went hand in hand; they were almost never called into question. Baptism, first communion and marriage were major events of family life. The education received at home was continued in the schools and colleges. Sundays and religious festivities were the heartbeat of social life; during those days, popular

religiosity was expressed with great exuberance. Since the faith was never really challenged, there was no need to spell it out, and by not being spelled out, it had become vague and somewhat hazy, like love which cools off when the words to express it cease to be uttered.

But, in Chile as elsewhere, society has evolved into a system of secularized institutions and modernism started promoting its values of profit, efficiency and scientific reasoning. The transmission of the faith began to falter, caught off its guard, as it were, by the profound social mutations that were taking place.

That is when *family catechesis*, which had modestly been initiated, appeared as a sign of the Spirit for the new evangelization needed by the Church of Chile. The Catechetical Service of the Diocese of Santiago elaborated and set up this type of catechesis to make it accessible to the whole country, beginning with the cities and villages.

If our
Christians accom-
plished half of what
Chilean Catholics do for
the education and accom-
paniment of their children,
the parishes would be
much more dynamic.

A catechist,
Loire, France

In this catechesis, it is the parents who undertake a process of initiation in the faith.

How does *family catechesis* work? When a child reaches the age of first communion, the parents themselves who register for a process of initiation in the faith. For two years, week after week, these adults gather in small groups of ten or twelve, get in touch again with the Word of God which comes to shed light on or to question their everyday life. The History of Salvation presented in the first year makes them aware of God's great plan of liberation. In the second year, they come into contact with Jesus, the Saviour, and with life within the Church. The *see, judge, act* pedagogy is used. The discussion starts from a fact of life, a very concrete example. Each person is called upon to express how he or she relates to this example or problem. Then a passage of the Bible is presented in connection with the real situation to be enlightened. Finally, in line with the theme of each meeting, a direction is drawn for daily life as a couple and as a family, as well as for relationships in the workplace.

What about the children in all this? At the end of each meeting, the parents return home with the mission to talk to their child about a few points of the theme of the meeting. The children have a catechetical workbook planned after the process followed by their parents, but at their level of understanding. They find in this workbook some questions for father or mother, at times a picture to be drawn to illustrate one point or another, and two or three sentences to keep in mind. Every week, these children meet with their catechetical animators, young people 17 or 18 years old, who have been especially prepared for

this purpose. Through games, songs, mimes and celebrations, the children review and get a deeper understanding of their own discoveries during their conversations with their parents.

The introduction of this new form of catechesis was not always easy. At the beginning, there was much reluctance, a feeling of incompetence on the part of parents. But there was also much joy and enthusiasm as the process went on and the participants discovered their faith and the words to express it.

The Church of Chile is truly a Church of involved lay people. It is doubtless in this way that we ought to reflect and reorganize our communities if we want to face the challenge of evangelization in our country.

**Claude Forest, priest,
France**

They have rediscovered a word of faith that is relevant in today's world.

Family catechesis marked a turning point in the articulate expression and in the transmission of the faith in Chile. It facilitated dialogue between adult believers, between parents and children and between children and young adults. Little by little, in the course of those two years of sharing, bonds were created, a small cell of the Church was born. It often happened that after the first communion of their children, some parents expressed the need to continue meeting together around the Word of God. Among the adults who took part in *family catechesis*, some became involved in pastoral work in the parish: social action, couple counselling, liturgy and choir, prayer group leadership, youth groups, etc. Others become facilitators in *family catechesis* and, in turn, helped new groups of parents. These people have developed an interest in the life of the Church; they have found a word of faith that is relevant in today's world. Isn't this experience in Chile an inspiration to us as we look for ways to achieve a new Evangelization? □



These children are involved in Family Catechesis. Sr. Aline Quirion (1st l.), Marie-Dolores Tremblay, M.I.C. (1st r.), and some animators accompany them.

Photo: M.I.C., Chile

Poor Clares in Namibia

By Céline Gauvin, M.I.C.



A new missionary venture begins for the Poor Clares of Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa. They recently founded a monastery in Namibia, in the southwestern part of the continent. Mother Clara, Abbess of the new community, wrote a group of M.I.C. Sisters about the experience of the new foundation. Here is their story based on that letter.

Founded in 1959 by French Poor Clares from Algeria, northern Africa, the monastery of Lilongwe, Malawi, has become part of the local scenery. A number of solid vocations from the area have matured over the years and have given an African colour to the contemplative life. The Franciscan spirituality, which harmonizes perfectly with the African mentality, provides an adequate expression to the spirit of cheerful and generous sharing found in the life of the villages. Inculturation manifests itself in many ways. The monastery has now become a modest centre of African arts and crafts: items made of banana fiber, decorated gourds or other local objects, liturgical vestments with painted or embroidered motifs.

The Community in Malawi has around forty members. Responding to the invitation of Archbishop Haushiku of Windhoek, Namibia, they felt that the time had now come for them to branch off to that country. Seven nuns, including Mother Clara who was then the Abbess of the Monastery of Lilongwe, were designated for this new foundation. The event gave a new perspective to the years Mother Clara spent with the M.I.C. Sisters as a student in Katete and then in Karonga. She loves to recall, with affection and gratitude, how she drew from the formation she received a missionary spirit that bears the mark of thanksgiving. What a rare and truly joy-filled opportunity for Mother Clara to be sent on mission to another country, another Church!

Customs change as one moves on to other climes. And, to understand



Photo: M.I.C., Africa

the language and culture of the country, there is nothing better than immersing oneself in the daily life of the mission of Okatana, in the north of Namibia. We are currently studying Oshindonga, the local language. It is a difficult language. It is only after one year of intensive study that we shall be able to speak it somewhat fluently. But it is a joy for us already to be able, from time to time, to understand a word or two in the people's conversations or in the prayers of the Mass. Every Sunday, we go to the outposts with a missionary of Okatana for the celebration of the Mass.

Enroute towards Namibia, the Poor Clares travel through Zambia. They rejoice upon meeting the M.I.C. Sisters of Chipata: Yolande Laroche, Edith Faucher and Noella Fréchette. For Mother Clara (2nd l.), this was a moving farewell.



Photos: L. Denis, M.I.C.



Local musical instruments accompany liturgical songs and dances.

The monastery, a modest centre of African arts and crafts

We thus get to know the people and they get to know us. Everyone wants to greet us. By spending a few days in a place on the border line of Namibia and Botswana, the newcomers acquire a first hand grasp of the pathetic situation in which the local tribes live: no work, no water, desert land unsuited for farming... How can one extend help and give hope to these people?

In spite of difficulties, the construction of the monastery was completed on the 4th of December, 1998. The next day, a Mass was celebrated in an atmosphere of profound joy. Located on the top of a mountain, the property has suitable space to provide solitude and prayer as well as a vast stretch on which to plant corn, vegetables and... flowers, as required by Franciscan tradition. On the grounds outside the cloister, there is space for a hostel, in keeping with the Poor Clares' tradition of hospitality. There remain serious problems to be solved with regard to the inadequate supply of water.

Being a small community in a new village, we can only take on a few rather simple projects, but we are very happy this way. We have resumed our two hours of adoration at night and we celebrated the Christmas season quite solemnly. Here as in Malawi, we shall be able to offer to God all the richness of the people of Namibia in their beautiful land and the kindness of their hearts, using their own music and culture while integrating them into our life. We shall carry in our hearts all their distress and their needs, the labour of their priests, the anguish of the dying, the suffering of the sick and of the poor, and the searching of those who do not yet know Christ. Prayer will be a guiding force in the efforts of this developing region. We are encouraged in this vision by believers who have recourse to our prayers. The missionaries, the priests and the religious request our prayers and the Church has confidence in our project of contemplative life.

After 100 years of existence, the Catholic Church of Namibia welcomes her first contemplative community from Malawi: the Poor Clares. What a marvelous reason to celebrate! □



We Come from Different Pathways

*Lord,
Pour into the hearts of all believers
a fraternal love which will enable them to meet
in a spirit of dialogue and sharing
that will soar above their differences.
May each one learn to discover the richness of the other.*

*Teach us to listen to one another
with patience and humility, so that our encounters
may become a crossroad where everyone will receive
as much as one gives,
even if we come from very different backgrounds.
Transform every baptized person into a ray of Your light,
that the world of the year 2000
may discover your presence and your love.
The whole world has become one big village...
Send us out to the open sea, towards the civilization of love
where that which brings us together
will free us from that which divides us.*

*Lord,
teach us this joy of faith, hope and love
which transforms our world!*

From a prayer by Danielle Poggi



In the Garden of God

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

Délia Tétreault, M.I.C.

Sister Lucille Richer (Sister Marie-Claudia)

Lucille was born in Mont-Laurier on August 12, 1920. Still quite young, she already dreamt of becoming a teaching religious. While reading the magazine, *LE PRÉCURSEUR*, she was seized by an ardent desire to become a missionary. Her mother's death drastically changed her plans. She had to assist her elder sister at the head of a household that already counted nine children. Thus, it was only eight years later, on the 1st of February, 1946, that she could at last realize her dream and enter our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

As a young religious, Sister Lucille was named for Granby. For six years, she was responsible for food services in our retreat house, a work which she assumed for 20 years in other houses of our Community. She also

participated in numerous tasks so as to assure the comfort of retreatants. Full dedication and unobtrusive, yet fruitful service marked all these years. In 1970, she left for Chile, a long-awaited mission. However, after two years, her frail health required her return to Canada.



Sister Lucille knew how to give time to prayer and to be a loving and gentle presence. A woman of many talents, she always gave her full measure. At age 77, she had recently celebrated her golden jubilee of religious profession when suddenly, in her sleep, the Lord took her away on July 7, 1998, at our house in St-Jean, Quebec.

Sister Cécile Auger (Sister Saint-Pie X)

Cécile was born on the 24th of September, 1902, at Les Écureuils in the region of Portneuf. On August 2, 1921, she entered our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Two years later, her sister Brigitte came to join her.



There was a need at that period to reorganize the work and activities of the Propagation of the Faith and of the Holy Childhood in the dioceses of Quebec. For 16 years, Sister Cécile devoted her time to missionary animation, first in Quebec city and then in Montreal. Later, she worked at the treasurer's office and assumed a service of authority in different M.I.C. houses. Having had the privilege of living close to our Foundress, she was deeply imbued with Délia Tétreault's spirit and transmitted that very spirit through her own being, her attitudes and her writings. To Délia, she gave staunch respect and friendship. Possessing a rare sense of history and

gifted with an extraordinary memory, she took pleasure in recalling significant moments that marked our M.I.C. life. Her numerous writings, her special choice of prayers and her fraternal sharings helped us to discover her deep Marian devotion, her love for the Eucharist, her

missionary heart and her way of expressing thanksgiving.

On August 2, 1989, at the age of 87, she entered our Infirmary in Pont-Viau. The same year, she was transferred to the Délia-Tétreault Pavilion. During this last stage, she manifested an extraordinary strength and vitality. She remained actively present to her companions, to community life and kept an ever lively interest for worldwide events. Sister Cécile returned to God very peacefully at dawn on July 17, 1998, at the age of 95. Her gentleness, goodness and profound thankfulness continue to influence our life.

Sister Annette Gouger (Sister Marie-Hervé)

Annette was born at l'Epiphanie, near Montreal, on February 15, 1917. She was attracted to religious life at an early age and was enthusiastic about her encounter with the M.I.C. Sisters at school. After her primary schooling, she had to help her mother whose own health was failing. On August 8, 1938, after three years of personal struggle, hardship and illness, she entered our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

She spent her first ten years of religious life at the Mother House in the service of education. In 1953, she

departed for Haiti where she worked for 20 years. At Delmas, Port-au-Prince, she took charge of an orphanage and then taught domestic science at the Normal School of Cap-Haitien. After her return to Canada in 1975, she rendered 18 years of service in Pont-Viau. Here, she combined material tasks with bursary, maintenance, reception and hospitality services. People who worked with her were aware that her days were long and her nights, often already well into the following day. Her dedication and sense of responsibility



were equalled only by her undaunted courage to carry on.

In 1993, Sr. Annette left for Joliette. After several operations, she learned to live with her suffering. Despite the energy that she exerted to fight the illness that sapped her strength, she had to leave Joliette to enter the Infirmary of Pont-Viau. She lived this last stage with serenity and deep faith. On July 11, 1998, she handed her life over to God. Sr. Annette lived 60 years with us, ardent and happy in the mission that God confided to her.

Sister Blandine Simard (Sister Blandine-de-Jésus)

Born in Roberval on the 5th of January, 1906, Blandine joined our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, in 1930. Four years later, she sailed out for Manchuria, in the North of China. She studied Mandarin and devoted herself to education. First appointed directress of a boarding school, she also lent a hand to Chinese teachers in a rural school. On September 8, 1935, she made her final profession in Szepinghai. In 1941, the Japanese invasion brought about the closure of the mission and house arrest for the Sisters. The Japanese defeat occurred four years later and



then, civil war between the communists and nationalists broke out. The Catholic Mission was destroyed after 15 years of work and suffering. Our Sisters had to leave for the South. Sister Blandine then proceeded to Canton where she gave lessons in English, music and singing to pupils of 14 nationalities. Under Communist pressure, she had to leave Canton and return to Canada.

Six years later, she left for Hong Kong. She gave some private French courses at our Tak Sun School. She also supervised the studies of the

children of the French colony and formed some lasting friendships with the families. Being quite fluent in Mandarin, she taught Christian doctrine to Hong Kong policemen who had come from the North of China and to their families; 65 of these families received Baptism.

In 1975, Sister Blandine returned to Canada for good. She continued to take on parish work and family visits. Experiencing advancing age and failing health at 83, she accepted to retire in Pont-Viau. She quietly passed away in her sleep on July 22, 1998. At her demise, we lost a captivating companion and a valiant missionary.

Sister Claire Garceau (Sister Saint-Némèse)

A native of Trois-Rivières, Claire was born on July 19, 1924. She made her final profession as a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception on the 5th of August, 1953.

That same year, Sister Claire left for Cuba where she gave classes in English and religion. With the Cuban revolution and exodus of religious, she returned to Canada where another venture was in store for her. She was sent to Peru where she opened the mission of Pucallpa in 1960 and organized a boarding school. The time she spent at Taizé and at the *École de la Foi* in Switzerland marked her deeply. She dreamt of starting a small

community so as to better communicate the Word of God and be closer to the people, especially the poor. The foundation of our mission of Santa Luzmila, on the outskirts of Lima, responded to her aspirations. Discreetly, she brought effective help to about a hundred poor families. She devoted her time to *family catechesis* and managed to involve the people in the evangelization of their milieu. The people loved her and she loved them.

In 1992, her failing health required that she return to Canada for good. She gave her time to Latin-Americans in



Montreal. Six years later, she came to Pont-Viau to live out, with courage and serenity, the last stage of her life. She reached her final moments on August 19, 1998, at the age of 74. During the funeral service, her brother Bernard recalled what Sister Claire had been for us in our midst: *Loving and giving, such was the mission that Claire accomplished tirelessly day after day, in an admirable way drawing all her energy, her assurance, her generosity and her ardour from her deep love of Christ.*

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.



Gilberte Perras, M.I.C.
from Ste-Catherine d'Alexandrie,
Diocese of St-Jean/Longueuil
Returned to Chile
in February 1999.



Jacqueline Vachet, M.I.C.
from Nomingue,
Diocese of Mont-Laurier.
Returned to Zambia
in September 1998.



Thérèse Lavoie, M.I.C.
from Montreal,
Diocese of Montreal.
Left for Peru
in September 1998
after having worked
in Guatemala.



Gisèle Lachapelle, M.I.C.
from Joliette,
Diocese of Joliette.
Returned to Chile
in October 1998.



Rose-Alice Rousseau, M.I.C.
from St-Stanislas,
Diocese of Chicoutimi.
Returned to Bolivia
in February 1999.



Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C.
from St-François-du-Lac,
Diocese of Nicolet.
Returned to Taiwan
in February 1999.



Myriam Laroche
lay missionary
from Princeville,
Diocese of Nicolet.
Returned to Taiwan
in October 1998.



Marcelle Paquet, M.I.C.
from St-Prosper,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Taiwan
in February 1999.



Madeleine Poulin
lay missionary
from St-Georges-de-Beauce,
Diocese of Quebec.
Left for Vancouver
in October 1998.



Jeanne Ostiguy, M.I.C.
from Acton Vale,
Diocese of St-Hyacinthe.
Returned to Cuba
in January 1999.



Thérèse Beaudet, M.I.C.
from Deschaillons,
Diocese of Quebec.
Returned to Peru
in December 1998.



Zénaide Correia, M.I.C.
from Açores,
Diocese of Angra, Portugal.
Returned to Cuba
in December 1998.

ALIVE WITH HOPE IN THE SPIRIT

Illustration: T. Moisson, M.I.C.

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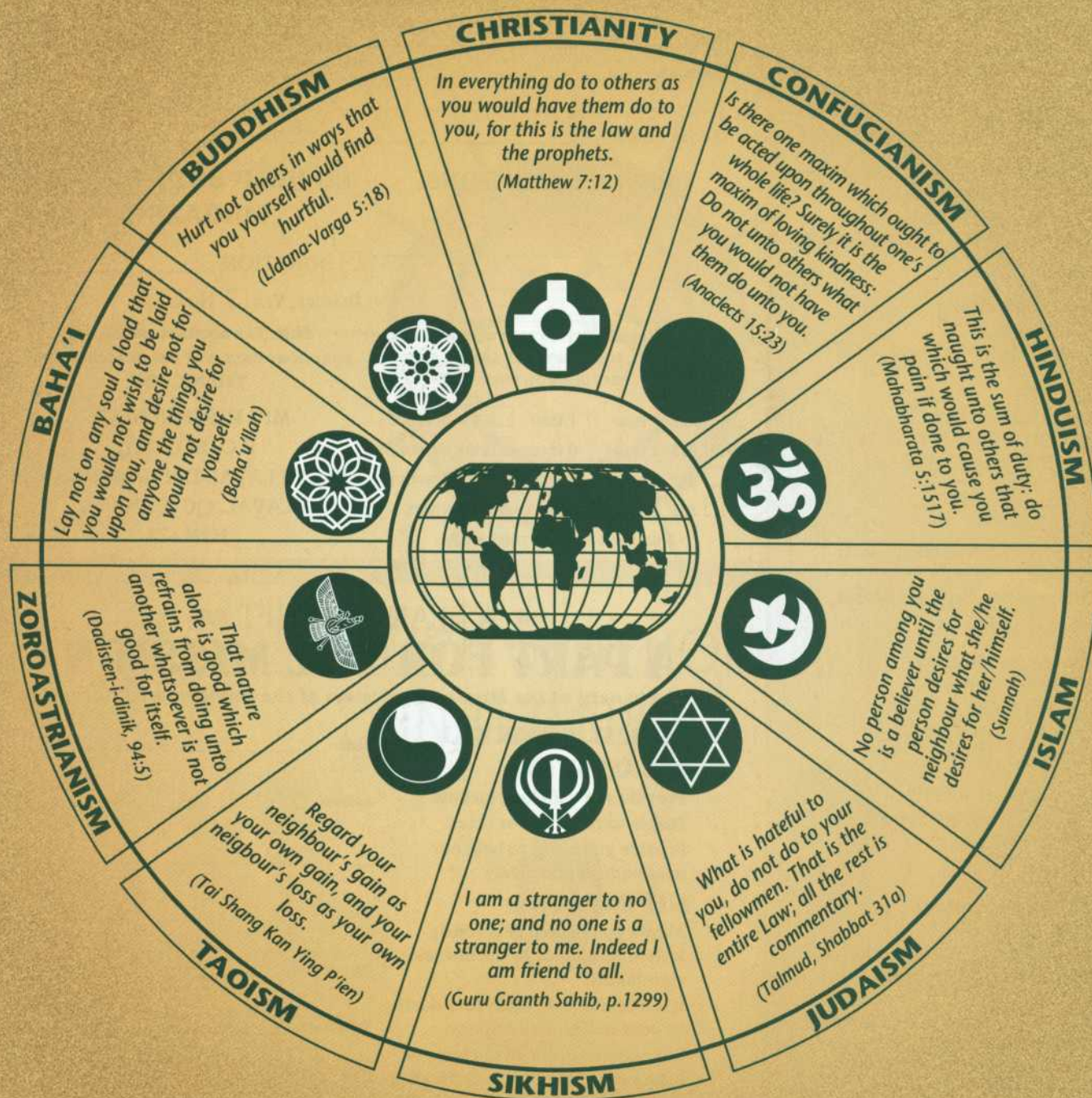
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