

MIC MISSION NEWS

APRIL - MAY - JUNE 2000

Culture of Peace

Cuba



**Horizons
of Hope**

Haiti

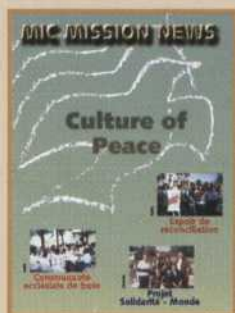


**Basic Christian
Communities**

Canada



Solidarity Project



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MIC MISSION NEWS

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Hopes of Reconciliation and of Peace



Solidarity Project

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS 2000

April

That the peoples of Africa, torn by discord and wars, may find in the Gospel the strength to repress any inclination to revenge and violence and to open their hearts to mercy and reconciliation.

May

That the Jubilee remembrance of the new martyrs may bring about a renewed missionary spring.

June

That in China, priests, religious men and women, and the laity may be animated by an apostolic and Catholic spirit.

By Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

What joy the gift of peace offers to the world! The seeds of peace have been sown within us, yet we can easily miss the budding presence of this gift.

Around us, plants and trees are sprouting new leaves and buds that burst into blooms. People have always associated the renewal of spring with celebrations of Easter - of new life and of the joy, hope and peace that it communicates. We are privileged to behold the onset of its fulfillment. Nature utters it every springtime and history expresses it when amidst all the devastation and chaos, men and women arise who reveal the hope for peace that lives within them.

A Budding Presence...

Peace is the underlying theme of this issue. Articles by our Sisters and contributors relate experiences where the reality that makes for peace is lived by very ordinary people. By their presence, words and actions, they promote peace in the lives of their family, friends and community. The call to peace urges them to embark on pathways whose destination holds the promise of building a world where people, regardless of race, creed or social status, can live in solidarity their brokenness and joy. They affirm that the unavoidable path for the disciples of Jesus today is to contribute to the *culture of peace* and

the development of people. Motivated by a genuine love and a profound respect for every individual, their commitment to peace pertains to a way of life in the deepest sense.

Every day we, too, struggle with the call to conversion and to a life dedicated to creating harmony in all our relationships. We are faced with the challenge of shaping the kind of world we desire. UNESCO has forged peace partnerships with organizations in all the continents to promote its

Culture of Peace Program. *The International Year for the Culture of Peace*, adopted by the United Nations for the year 2000, proclaims the resolve of the world community towards this goal.

Is this not for us an opportune time to bring the same kind of dedication in our daily life? The patient yearnings of our hearts make us bearers of hope-filled dreams that the buds of peace we nurture will one day yield a profusion of blooms.



Photo: B. Yelle, Éditions Anne Sigier

Building Peace Today



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

There is no true peace without respect for the human being in all its dimensions. Everything forms a harmonious whole. Social justice, the promotion of human rights, sustainable development, international solidarity... *The promotion of a culture of peace necessitates a unanimity of interventions*, says Raymond Levac, Director of the Service of Education (French sector), *Development and Peace*.

The year 2000 was proclaimed **International Year of the Culture of Peace** by the United Nations General Assembly. One understands all the more this decision when one considers the number of conflicts experienced worldwide.

In his report of last September, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, ascertained the multiplicity of conflicts and regional wars, those widely mediated

like that of Kosovo, but equally those the least cited - in Angola, in Ethiopia and in Eritrea.

The causes of wars and conflicts are evidently multiple and complex just as their solutions. However Mr. Kofi Annan's account in no way fails to point out that, in many cases, *the armed conflicts are much more a struggle to control economic resources than the result of enmity between ethnic and religious groups*. This recalls the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* of Pope Paul VI which established a bond between war, violence, injustice and underdevelopment

and made him affirm that the *new name for peace is development*.

Globalization, a Factor for Peace?

One could believe that globalization of economy should limit wars. It is true that in the past, commercial wars indeed often turned into military wars. Today, this hostile coincidence has been transformed into conflicts involving the grand economic blocs - *Europe, America, Asia* - or still, the great financial empires. These financial elites wage war on money markets. They also invest in the areas where they define to their own advantage the rules of the market - groups such as the World Organization of Commerce, the *World Bank*, the *International Monetary Funds* or the *Agreement of Free Trade* between countries. What is targetted more and more is the liberty of the market that concentrates wealth between the hands of a few while provoking the exclusion and impoverishment of people in alarming proportions. Such factors of exclusion and impoverishment would lead to even more frustration, revolts, violence and wars.

Measures imposed by the *International Monetary Funds* favour the devaluation of money, the cutting down of the role of the State and of the expenses for health and education, the deterioration of the conditions of work and of public services, the loss of social advantages, etc. All of this has major consequences within the country affected: disappearance of the middle class, impoverishment of the majority, the spread of diseases that were believed to have already disappeared, the struggle for survival in the commerce of drugs or informal economy.

All this kindles tensions and conflicts already present in societies. For example, the scapegoats of these misfortunes are sought among the ethnic people or of those of other religions and upon whom resentment and frustration are cast. Likewise, where victims of impoverishment organized themselves to demand their rights - *most of the time peaceably*, the authorities strengthen their police and military gear so as to face these popular disputes and subdue them harshly. Thus, paramilitary militia set up by the owners of real estate as in Brazil and in



By Raymond Levac

Columbia, repressed and killed the leaders of popular organizations, journalists and defenders of human rights who supported the people in their struggle for justice. Behind the combatants are ordinarily found great financial interests that want to ensure the supply of raw materials. Internal conflicts are also sustained, or else provoked by weapon dealers. It must be noted that in the world approximately 820 billions of dollars are spent per year in armaments (more than two billions per day).

Multiple Solutions

Working for the culture of peace entails a totality of interventions. We can bring to mind the partners of *Development and Peace* in Rwanda and the Congo. The former have placed Hutus and Tutsis together, the majority women, to construct houses meeting their mutual needs. In addition to building homes, they lived

more and more a process of reconciliation. Also, a Congolese organization has mobilized the civic population around an approach for peace and the peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Pressure is exercised on certain governments as in Haiti and Brazil to set up processes or judiciary structures assuring that the authors of crimes are condemned. These sanctions allow to diminish the number of organized attempts against the defenders of human rights by people who benefit by immunity.

Actions are also directed to the G7 countries, the *International Monetary Funds* and the *World Bank* by different coalitions of Jubilee 2000 in view of cancelling the debts of the poorest countries and stopping the imposition of laws of the market which create exclusion and impoverishment. There are equally other mobilizations like those that brought on the failure of

negotiations of the *World Organization of Commerce* in Seattle or the *Multilateral Accord on Investment*.

This year UNESCO has launched a vast program of activities on the Culture of Peace. This project involves nations, universities and colleges as well as civic organizations and aims to reinforce their efforts in the education to peace: a formation to democracy, education to tolerance and solidarity, the promotion of human rights, to freedom of expression and information, to peace and international security, to social and economic development.

Finally, the support to the process of democratization, to groups defending human rights, to alternative projects of economic organizations, to networks of international solidarity should allow a better social, economic, political and cultural development of people and, as stated by Pope Paul VI, *should favour peace.* ●



An Experience Filled with Hope

Since several years, Basic Christian Communities have taken roots everywhere in Haiti. We call them *TI Komlnote Legliz* (TKL), a well-chosen name to express their identity. The repression brought about by the coup d'état of 1991 has slowed down their activities. They carry on today, through accomplishments and setbacks, in building small communities of faith. Sr. Léna Lagredelle works in Jacquesyl, a formation centre for the animators of these communities in the northeastern part of Haiti. A courageous and hope-filled experience...



By Léna Lagredelle, M.I.C.

Hidden deep in a rural milieu, the Pastoral Formation Centre of Jacquesyl offers an ideal setting for reflection and teamwork. Situated around 33 kilometres from the town of Cap-Haitien, it can be reached by routes most often worn out and flooded during the rainy season. This small locality is part of the diocese of Fort-Liberté, a young diocese established only eight years ago. The Centre opened its doors in 1996. With its numerous and diverse commissions, it offers today services in catechesis, family pastoral work, education, health and even agriculture. It gives ongoing formation to various groups - village organizations, women, promoters of human rights and TKL delegates. Fr. Gabriel Charles, diocesan priest, is director of the Centre and the head of the small communities. A pioneer in this pastoral ministry of the Diocese of Cap-Haitien and Fort-Liberté, he pursues their formation with enthusiasm and competence.

Periods of Formation

From time to time, the animators of the communities meet at Jacquesyl for a formation period. The sessions last a week and are addressed to the 24 TKL animators of a same parish. The formation period is an intensive experience of community life, of listening to the Word of God, of training in area analysis - Church and Society. The participants learn techniques for group animation and learn new ways of tackling the functioning of their community. They return to their respective groups with the mandate of animating their members on a common ground: listening to the Word of God, prayer, fraternal communion, solidarity, mission.

The Church of the Locality...

The Basic Christian Community is meant for all family members - adults and children. It gathers about 15 to 18 persons of five to six families. There may be several TKL in one same area. Each week, their members assemble in one family, and each Sunday, they join the large parish assembly held in the church or in a chapel.

At the weekly assembly, time is allotted for prayer and sharing on the Word of God. This is the most important phase. Guided by an animator, the children then occupy themselves with particular projects while the adults look into what could be done to favour life in their community. The Word of God is listened to, commented upon, and becomes actualized. It might be a situation to straighten out, a road to be repaired, an epidemic to prevent or stop. Participants look at the

Le nègre marron,
symbol of independence

problem together, seek out the cause and find solutions. Then, one day or another, they notice multiple transformations evident in the lives of their fellow-members. In a chance encounter, a justice of peace claimed: *People here no longer come to court. They seem to have learnt to speak out and to settle their differences without referring to a judge.* A parish priest spoke about the solidarity, the team spirit and the courage that the TKL displayed in his parish: *They undertake a variety of projects and tasks - construction of small schools, reparation of roads, the transportation of provisions to school canteens, etc.*

On his part, Fr. Gabriel Charles noted: *The TKL is the Church of the locality, the Church of the people, a community of faith, a community of life. It allows the Church to intervene in an efficient and direct way as much for evangelization as for human promotion. Joined together by a service of coordination, the TKL presents the advantages of an organization favouring the fulfilment of small enterprises, of cooperatives, of agricultural and economic projects, as well as alphabetization in underprivileged areas. What fundamentally characterizes the TKL is the commitment of its members to build the Kingdom of God as a reign of justice, peace and love.*

A Route Strewn with Success and Trials

The Church of Haiti has lived exciting moments of its history with the TKL. Even today, in spite of difficulties, the TKL still remains a privileged way of evangelizing the area, and one of the best means of living in solidarity and of coming out from underdevelopment. Fr. Gabriel summarizes the strong moments of the TKL experience in his sector: From 1980 to 1987, the TKL was created in many parishes. People joined in with enthusiasm. A new era was forthcoming. The experience enchanted even unbelievers. In 1987, the political crisis erupted and the TKL was forced to take another path. There was great difficulty in coming together and participants were accused by those in power to be agents of popular upheavals. They were hunted throughout the country; there was no letup. In 1991, came a revival of confidence. The wind of renewal blew for a time but was of short duration. As of September, a terrible repression seized the entire country. The coup d'etat of 1991 swept through the TKL. Hundreds of members and animators were arrested because they were known as participants of the TKL. Many had to go in hiding, leaving their families, their work and their home. Fear was everywhere. Everything had to be started again.

Indeed, adversities for the TKL members were not lacking. Even today, one can still speak about a certain fear. Yet, there never was a more appropriate moment to relaunch it. With the democratic opening, freedom of speech and assembly having been acquired, we are trying to breathe in a new dynamism. But it is not without causing great difficulty because the animators are caught up by political parties. The confidence put in them has been betrayed by embezzlement and corruption. Revival is slow and where the TKL groups exist, they barely recover. In spite of all, we pursue our task with the firm assurance that they will spring back to life with vigour, for where there is conversion, these communities are lively centres of evangelization and effective resources for liberation and development. ●



Young people love to gather together.

Photo: M.I.C., Haiti



The Word of God is also sung and celebrated in the church. (at Acquin)

Photo: J.-M. Mazerolle



Solidarity and dialogue are encouraged at the Jacquesyl Centre.

Photo: M.I.C., Haiti

CUBA

Havana, Plaza of the Jose Marti Revolution

Photo : Foto Estudio Revolución, Cuba

Hopes of Reconciliation and of Peace

Cathedral of Havana

Photo : COPREFIL, Cuba

Cuba possesses remarkable political, economic and social characteristics which set it apart from the American continent. In this country, how to live out a spirituality and take the actions favouring reconciliation, solidarity and peace? Sara Olga Pérez, a Cuban M.I.C., member of the Department of Pastoral Coordination of the Conference of Bishops of Cuba, shares her insights and deep convictions.

In Cuba, we have a long tradition in favour of peace. Even during the time of struggles for independence, war was assumed as a last resort. The

Cuban national apostle, Jose Marti, spoke of the necessary war but he also expressed well in the *Manifesto of Montecristi*, the most profound ideal of love and peace of our national history. This deep desire for peace exists at the heart of our people. It has allowed us in many difficult occasions to take the first steps toward reconciliation. It motivates us today to search for means of dialogue in the midst of conflicts, as we are made to understand by Pope John Paul II: *It is evident that the problems which render more difficult and discouraging the path towards peace are many and complex, but peace is a need deeply rooted within the heart of each human being. That is why the will to seek it intensely must not lessen ...*

By Sara Olga Pérez, M.I.C.

However, amidst many struggles presently experienced at all levels, one questions: Where is the desire for peace given by God to our people?

The experience of the past years has deepened in me the unshakable belief that peace demands spaces where individuals may realize themselves as persons, where their dignity is respected, their personal liberty guaranteed. A society where persons are not considered as objects but more as agents of their own history. I have observed how peace received from Christ energizes our steadfast efforts of solidarity and reconciliation.



The perseverance and the growth of the Church reveal its vitality. Sr. Sara Olga Pérez (1st l.)

In Search of Solutions

Our type of society is not alien to the actual crisis that shakes the world. Moreover, there are family, educational and social structures that have favoured this lack of a sense of responsibility among the people. As the economic situation of our country has worsened these last ten years, due to internal factors and unacceptable economic measures, the decline of the life condition of our people became more evident. The social differences have been accentuated. The law of survival has often led to individualism. The value of sharing diminishes, and we witness at the same time the growth of violence and administrative corruption. None of these factors favours peace, on the contrary... the State, civil society, the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches are looking for solutions and are facing enormous and overwhelming challenges.

At the core of injustice God gives signs and calls us to collaborate with Him to seek out solutions to these problems. This commitment supposes on our part a profound belief that the Kingdom of God is in our midst but has not yet reached its fulness. It also invites to a constant

attitude of discernment and conversion. This mission touches all the structures of our society.

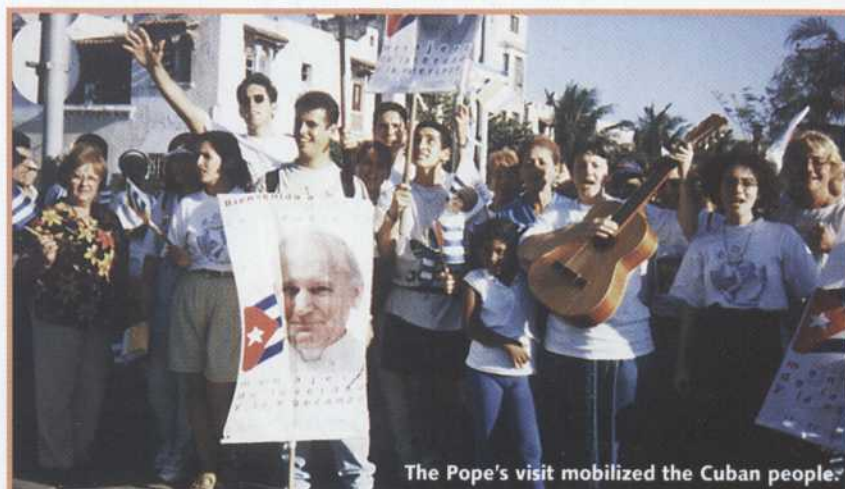
It is essential to know how this desire for peace that God has given to our people is concretized: the gestures of youth to assume their personal and social history so as to accept the frustrations which arise from the outside; the simple and patient ministry of those accompanying them; the efforts of numerous couples to reconcile; the generosity of health personnel who, despite the lack of medical supplies and equipment, seek to ease the suffering of the sick; the initiatives for a frank dialogue in the Church-State relations; the efforts allowed to the

Justice and Peace Commission and pastoral agents ministering to prisoners to promote the well-being of prisoners and their families; the catechetical ministry carried out in the parishes to spread the message of God's love. It is our hope that one day, the river of peace will pass through our vales and mountains.

The Church and Peace

The Church is aware of the necessity of the State to create a social environment and adequate legislation to allow each person to live freely one's faith, to express it in the context of public life and to count on sufficient measures and spaces to bring to national life its spiritual resources. Among the spaces claimed by the Church, one can mention the access to means of social communication and the possibility to count on the particular assistance offered in this sector. To accomplish the mission of evangelization is a normal element in a civic state. We have such a great need of means of communication that liberally diffuse the peace and love so deeply desired by all.

During his visit to Cuba, Pope John Paul II left an enlightening message to strengthen hope in the hearts of our people. The realization of this message will help us concretize one of our deepest aspirations: *That all of us Cubans might one day fraternally offer peace to one another.* ●



The Pope's visit mobilized the Cuban people.

Towards Peace



By André Beauchamp

When I was a young college student and worked desperately to learn Latin, a phrase often came to mind: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. If you want peace, prepare for war. This phrase resumed in a way, the manner of thinking of ancient Rome, at the time the city of Rome enjoyed the possession of a vast empire and imposed its peace on the whole world.

In this proverb were bits of wisdom. One requires a certain strength in order to be held in respect by others: at times physical, economic, psychic or spiritual strength. The pretension of Rome was to possess the ability to wage and win the war against any nation. The peace of Rome was based on fear and domination. It was an imposition. This is still largely the rule in the world today. We all know that some countries impose peace to their neighbours at their own price and conditions.

Thus flows peace throughout the world. It is often but a respite between two wars. A strange ailment of humanity to want unceasingly to wage war, to develop tirelessly means of destruction to start again the slaughter, always claiming that this war will be the good one and the last one, since at last the enemy will be destroyed completely. And thus is maintained, by violence itself, the sowing of the next confrontation. Violence which breeds violence, which breeds violence...

Truly, there is but one way to avoid war and to build peace. It is to establish justice. Peace through terror and power is short-lived. Peace supposes equitable economic relationships. It requires a commitment for solidarity and respect. Upon preparing this article, I reread a text of almost forty years ago of John XXIII: *This supposes that to the axiom stating that peace is the outcome of the equilibrium of armaments, one substitutes the principle that true peace cannot be built without mutual confidence (...). International relationships cannot be settled by armed forces; what ought to direct them, is the norm of wisdom - the law of truth, justice and solidarity carried out with cordiality.* (Pacem in Terris, 1963)

In the context of the Jubilee Year, Church groups insistently demand the cancellation of the debts of Third-World countries. Already more than two million persons have signed the petition in this sense and an alliance of all forces concerned with justice and social equity is being created to give peace a chance. We need to learn untiringly to become human.

This is when the establishment of peace demands the elaboration of a culture of peace, that is, a commitment for solidarity and justice, but also an effort for personal inner transformation. One needs to pray for peace for it is also a gift of God. It is at once a gift of God and a human responsibility. ●

Artisans of Peace

My peace might have been
a wild flower,
of those flowers in the fields
that no one sows nor reaps.
Peace could have been
of those flowers in the meadow
that one finds fully bloomed
one lovely morning,
by the roadside,
under a tree
or at the turn of a brook.
It would have been enough to pick up
peace
as one gathers mushrooms
or as one plucks heather
or the large one-eyed daisy.

On the contrary,
peace entails work,
it is a task.
One has to make peace
as one makes wheat.
One has to make peace
as it takes years
to make a rose
and centuries to make a vine.
Peace does not exist in the savage state:
There is no peace other than that
with a human face...
The peace that men and women receive
from God
and which they build with the vitality
of the Risen Christ.

Adapted from Peuple du Monde, No. 208



Photo : Refugees, No. 108

Along Mission Routes...

Lord, we ask you to accompany in their mission those who leave in Your name to proclaim your Gospel. By their witness, their friendship and their presence,
*may those who need to be comforted be so;
 may those who seek peace find it;
 may those who wish to give thanks do so;
 and may each one return home
 with the joy of having met Jesus Himself,
 He, the Way, the Truth and the Life.'*



**Adeline Bonny, M.I.C. -
 From Limbe, Diocese of
 Cap-Haitien, Haiti**

Last August, Sr. Adeline returned to Madagascar after spending five years in Haiti where she served in the education ministry and continued her ongoing formation in religious science. Now ministering in Morondava, she is in charge of the French section of our primary school with an attendance of 500 pupils.



**Colombe Gagnon, M.I.C. -
 From St-Roch-de-l'Achigan,
 Diocese of Joliette**

Last November, Sr. Colombe returned to Malawi, Africa, after serving 21 years in Canada. Warmly welcomed in the Diocese of Mzuzu where she worked as a missionary from 1964 to 1978, she now gives a helping hand to the M.I.C. team working at Marymount Girls' Secondary School and is involved in diocesan pastoral ministry.



**Lucille Gagnon, M.I.C. -
 From Rivière-du-Loup,
 Diocese of Quebec**

Sr. Lucille has spent 35 years in Haiti. Having returned there in December 1999, she collaborates in the multiple projects of the M.I.C. residence at Delmas where the Provincial House and a primary school of 200 pupils are also located.



**Irene Rivet, M.I.C. -
 From Montreal,
 Archdiocese of Montreal**

Sr. Irene returned to Madagascar in November 1999. She collaborates in the administration of our large school of Ambohibary (1000 students). There she share her rich experience of more than 25 years as directress and teacher.



**Lucette Gilbert, M.I.C. -
 From St. Prime,
 Diocese of Chicoutimi**

Sr. Lucette returned to Haiti last December. At Cap-Haitien, she pursues her work of mission animation in the schools of the diocese. The mission magazine *Timoun Misyonè* (Missionary Children) that she launched 15 years ago remains popular among the children and is widely used as a resource material on mission awareness.



**Estrella Solibio, M.I.C. -
 From Mati, Diocese of Mati,
 Philippines**

In January, Sr. Estrella returned to Japan where she has been serving as a teacher for the past 15 years. A dedicated and efficient educator, she resumes her teaching ministry among graders and kindergarten pupils at our school in Aizu Wakamatsu. She also continues to give mission awareness sessions to Filipino women from five different churches in the area.



**Jeannine Boily, M.I.C. -
From St-Philippe de Clermont,
Diocese of Quebec**

Last December, Sr. Jeannine returned to Peru where she has been working for the past 14 years. She had previously ministered in Guatemala for 17 years. At present, she is in Tate in the Diocese of Ica where an M.I.C. team ensures the animation of a rural parish.



**Gabrielle Roberge -
From St-Gabriel-de-Brandon,
Diocese of Joliette**

Gabrielle has worked in Peru. In January 2000, she left for Pachacutec in the diocese of Ica where she has the responsibility of a parish community. She is associated with our Community as a lay missionary.



**Carmen Ménard, M.I.C. -
From Côteau-du-Lac,
Diocese of Valleyfield**

Sr. Carmen returned to Lima, Peru in January. Her training and experience in Personality and Human relationships (P.H.R.) will enable her to accompany other persons and groups in their human and spiritual growth.



**Florisina Françoise, M.I.C. -
From Belo-sur-Tsiribihina, Diocese
of Morondava, Madagascar**

Sr. Florisina left for Zambia in December 1999. She is now at Nkata-Bay, concentrating on the study of English before attempting to study Chitumbuka, the local language. She will work as a midwife at our Health Centre of Kanyanga in Zambia.



**Louise Laberge, M.I.C. -
From St-Louis-de-Gonzague,
Diocese of Valleyfield**

After devoting her time to the integral formation of young Bolivian women at the Institute for Rural Education of Cochabamba, Bolivia, Sr. Louise pursues her ministry in Lima, Peru as of January 2000. She accompanies young women who wish to commit themselves to religious life in our Community.



**Françoise Royer, M.I.C. -
From Ste-Hénéline,
Diocese of Quebec**

A nurse and midwife, Sr. Françoise worked during five years in Malawi, then at the refugee camps in the Philippines, Malawi and Burundi. She left last November for Lebanon. At the prison compound of Roumich in Beyrouth where some 3,500 persons are detained, she is in charge of the nursing personnel and a group of 40 volunteers. She also gives a hand at the School of Midwifery in Beyrouth.

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Solidarity Project

In Collaboration

Trips, humanitarian aid, cooperative ventures, encounters with peoples of other countries - It is in these terms that young people speak about the mission. For the past few years, Sisters of our Community have intensified their presence among the youth, offering them the places and privileged occasions to experience a missionary stage. Here is how this undertaking is being realized...



Port-au-Prince. The journey opens up new horizons. The group Solidarité-Monde and Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C. (1st r.)

Many of our young people wishing to live out solidarity, dialogue with cultures and the experience of faith, set out on the open roads of the world. In my opinion, they are the new missionaries of our times, the prophets of a new time of the Gospel, of a Church that loves with a love as vast as the world, affirms Msgr F. Lapierre, P.M.É.

Young people, the new type of missionaries? Since six years, we welcome them each year in the project, *Solidarité-Monde* (Solidarity-World). What enriching and memorable experiences are lived by these young people who carry deep within themselves a bright flame, desiring to communicate it, to kindle it wherever they go during their missionary stage.



Canada. Formation week-end. Jeannine Bélair, M.I.C. (1st l.), Monique Fortier, M.I.C. (2nd r.), Gaëtane Perron, M.I.C. (1st r.).

Since 1994, the groups with whom we work follow one another and by learning from experience, their objectives become more precise and continue in the different projects that are organized. Of age 20 to 30, young university students or young people already in the workforce, knock at our door to realize a dream of the gift of self, knowledge of the other and especially to fulfil a desire to share. An earnest desire for universal solidarity has taken hold of them ever since their childhood and they now want to take the chance of setting out to discover another culture.

Mission by and for the Youth

Bolivia, Haiti, Taiwan, Philippines, Peru and Chile have hosted, each in turn, these young people for periods of five weeks or for two to three months. In the framework of the Missionary Congress of Latin America, Argentina hosted the youth and at present others are preparing to live the World Youth Days 2000 in Rome. The warm welcome, the smiles exchanged, and the sharing of traditions do away with prejudice and foster a profound experience of internationality. While respecting one another's differences and personal dignity, the universal family is built. This is a great learning experience of the mission today - of

spreading love, of accepting the other as he or she is, of being present to others, for love comes from God, this God who made Himself very close to us by becoming one of us.

A stage referred to as missionary has to be prepared. A Christian formation, cultural and psychological, is offered during the course of the year. Resource persons are invited, an M.I.C. team accompanies the young people. Little by little, the project casts a vibrant tone on the life of the whole group and on the Christian values that all the members have taken time to deepen and to live. It is at this point that the stage becomes missionary.

Testimonies

The young participants in this project affirm what they have lived and how they return transformed:

To live alongside people of faith has been an impetus for me to advance in my spiritual growth. The dedication and peace that religious men and women experience in Haiti have kindled the flame that lay dormant within me since a few years. I have set out in search of God. He is teaching me what it means to be free. Geneviève

I wanted to learn more about myself through life in a group and in contact with another culture. Actually, I am convinced that by living for a time one's personal values in different conditions and in a different milieu is an excellent way for a young adult like myself, to evaluate one's values in order to advance towards harmony with oneself and with others.

A participant

Interior emptiness... A profound lack that I cannot identify... A search for something great, strong... A desire to share. All that led me to leave for Haiti... Joy, compassion, listening and the welcome that I found there opened my heart and my soul... I was transformed by the children, the domestic helpers, children so little and yet taken up by tasks and a life situation that an adult could hardly bear. Little ones getting up in the wee hours of the morning to prepare the meal for the entire household; who had to see to the chores, look after children, go to fetch water; and who often retired late into the night on an empty stomach and with the only assurance that tomorrow will repeat itself. This experience was for me an opportunity to reflect on what is essential: the human person in all its beauty. Stéphanie

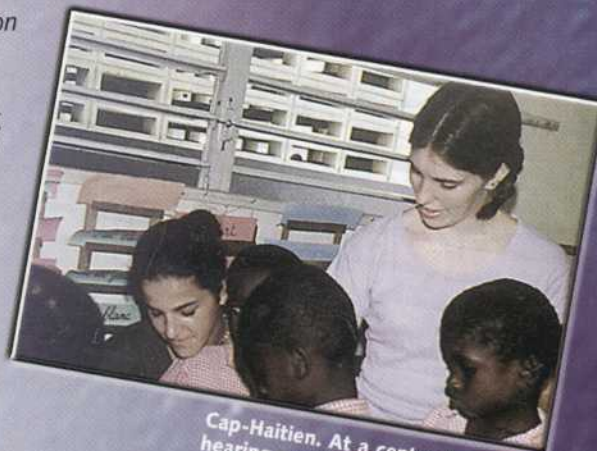
During this Jubilee Year 2000, ten young people are preparing with enthusiasm, fidelity and seriousness to live a missionary experience in Peru, in the Diocese of Ica. They will share their knowledge, their love with 150 children, of age six to fourteen. They have already started to study Spanish with the hope of communicating more easily with the people, of getting to know them better and loving them more. We are happy to support the projects of these Canadian youth so as to help them live out their values according to the spirit of the Gospel... Are they not the new missionaries of the third millennium? ●



Cap-Haitien. Catherine Bédard, a medical doctor, dedicates her skills to the service of a local dispensary.



Bolivia, Cochabamba. Quality time to discover the country and its people.



Cap-Haitien. At a centre for young people with hearing problems, Stéphanie and Marie-Claude bring comfort and a loving presence.



Celebrating the Jubilee 2000



Pilgrims Together

With spring and the arrival of summer, the Jubilee Year 2000 begins a new season of liturgical feasts and the celebration of significant events. The entire Church sets out on a journey. Towards Rome. Towards the Holy Land. And, in different countries, towards sanctuaries of faith. These sacred journeys undertaken by pilgrims convey the deep sense of the Jubilee Year 2000. It is, in fact, a long interior journey where believers move forward in faith and rediscover the great values of the Jubilee tradition in the Bible. Jesus made this tradition His own at the very beginning of His ministry. It calls to a conversion and to a commitment to render the world all the more consistent with God's project according to Biblical perspectives: redistribution of wealth, release from bondage, renewal of the earth.

The pilgrimage is richly symbolic and meaningful. It is an image of our human existence and of our Christian life. Since always, men and women in search of God have set out on journeys towards sites of spirituality, towards the encounter of witnesses. It is a demanding experience because it has a purpose that lights up the whole journey. There is a need to move on, to let go of everything that impedes the journey, to live the endurance test and at times, the trial of darkness. But at the same time, an interior itinerary comes about. A transformation occurs. The meaning of existence is renewed. Such an experience brings to greater light how faith is put in movement, displacement and itinerary towards God.

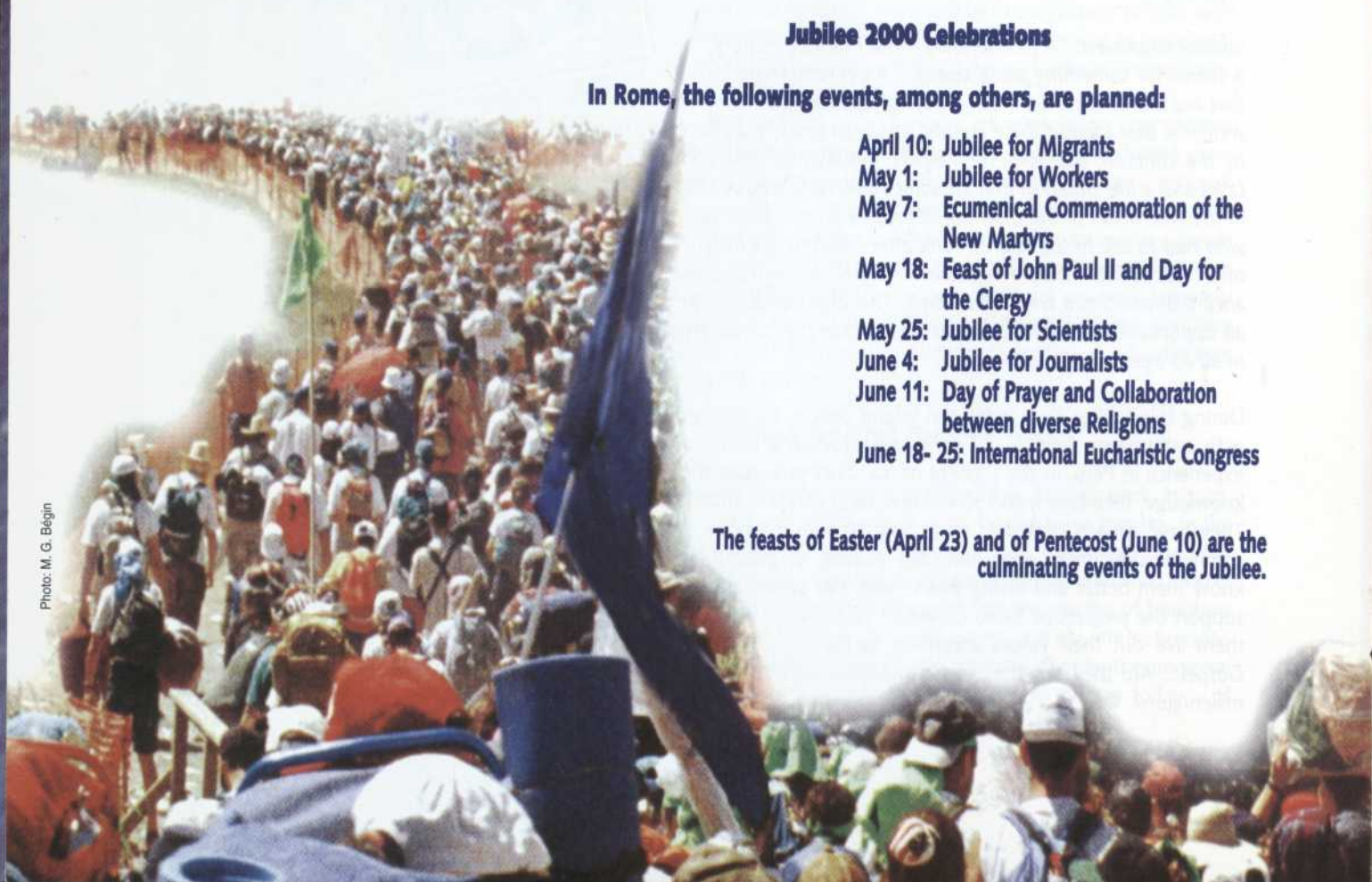
The pilgrimage is also a sign of movement more vast and universal than humanity. Today, entire populations face enormous sacrifices to escape hunger, wars, natural catastrophes. Moreover, people pursue positive goals affecting tourism, scientific exploration, commerce, sports and culture. With the pilgrims of today, the Church wishes to go forward on the paths of fraternity and of solidarity. This is a Jubilee invitation. ●

Jubilee 2000 Celebrations

In Rome, the following events, among others, are planned:

- April 10:** Jubilee for Migrants
- May 1:** Jubilee for Workers
- May 7:** Ecumenical Commemoration of the New Martyrs
- May 18:** Feast of John Paul II and Day for the Clergy
- May 25:** Jubilee for Scientists
- June 4:** Jubilee for Journalists
- June 11:** Day of Prayer and Collaboration between diverse Religions
- June 18- 25:** International Eucharistic Congress

The feasts of Easter (April 23) and of Pentecost (June 10) are the culminating events of the Jubilee.



Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace

Drafted by a group of Nobel Peace Laureates, the Manifesto 2000 does not appeal to a higher authority, but instead it is an individual commitment and responsibility. It seeks the personal commitment of individuals to subscribe to and translate into their daily actions, the values of peace, tolerance, sharing and solidarity. Launched by UNESCO as part of its preparations for the International Year for the Culture of Peace, the Manifesto is open to signature by people all over the world. The goal is to present 100 million signatures to the United Nations Assembly in September 2000. We, too, are strongly encouraged to express our personal commitment by signing the Manifesto... **Peace is in our hands!**

I PLEDGE IN MY DAILY LIFE, IN MY FAMILY, MY WORK, MY COMMUNITY, MY COUNTRY AND REGION, TO:

1. Respect all life.

Respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice.

2. Reject violence.

Practise active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological, economical and social, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents.

3. Share with others.

Share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice and political and economic oppression.

4. Listen to understand.

Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening without engaging in fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others.

5. Preserve the planet.

Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet.

6. Rediscover solidarity.

Contribute to the development of my community, with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles, in order to create together new forms of solidarity.

The Manifesto can be signed on the Internet: www.unesco.org/manifesto2000
or sent to: Manifesto 2000, UNESCO,
7 Place de Fontenoy, F-75352 Paris 07 SP, France

Surname.....Name.....Date of Birth..... Sex: F ☐ M ☐

City/Town of residence.....

Country.....

Date.....

Signature :

News from Here



A social and cultural workshop. Andréée Ménard, M.I.C. (5th l.)



Rita Ostiguy, M.I.C. and a Bolivian peasant

Welcoming Cities

Since always, immigrants have chosen to make their new homes in large cities. In the area of Côte-des-Neiges, in Montreal, they comprise 70% of the population. Their presence in their new surroundings inspires far-reaching effects. Their economic and cultural contributions are considerable but they experience difficulty in finding their place in society and in the Church.

Since my return from Japan in 1986, this situation challenged me without end. With three young lay collaborators, I set up, in 1988, in Montreal, the organism PROMIS (*Promotion - Intégration - Société Nouvelle*). A nonprofit, multicultural and multiconfessional group, it aims to favour the integration of persons newly arrived and the defence of their rights. By virtue of this objective, it has a two-year mandate as a member of the Orientation Committee of the Montreal Centre for Inter-University Research on Immigration, Integration and Urban Dynamics.

Last December, I had the privilege of participating in the Fourth Annual International *Metropolis Conference* held in Washington, D.C. An international organization, the Metropolis focuses its mission of research on immigration, integration and urban dynamics. At the conference, approximately 400 participants coming from metropolises of the world delved deeply into different situations confronting immigrants who choose to live in large cities. Emphasis was put on social belonging and the integration of newcomers to the market of housing and employment in urban milieus. On its part, it is with new impetus that PROMIS continues to pursue its mission to help immigrants build, together with the local people, a just and equitable society desired by all.

Andrée Ménard, M.I.C.

They Reached Out to Us ...

Hoyadas is a tiny village hidden in the depths of the Bolivian Andes, four hours away from Cochabamba. The villagers make magnificent woolen ponchos from the wool of lambs and alpacas and travel to nearby towns to sell them for a scanty profit. In 1998, an earthquake opened a gap in the mountain where they had settled and their village was just about totally destroyed. People from the neighbouring areas soon manifested their solidarity, coming quickly together to raise funds and supplies for the victims of the disaster. The Conference of Religious of Cochabamba and the people of the diocese collaborated in the construction of 28 houses to replace those which had been destroyed. A group of students in architecture offered valuable assistance.

Upon completion of the housing project, I joined a group of religious men and women to visit the people of Hoyadas. After a tour of the area, I participated in a Thanksgiving Mass which allowed the people to give thanks for the solidarity experienced during the disaster. The gathering was the opportune occasion to hand over to them the title deeds of ownership of their new homes. How heart-warming it was to see the villagers receive their certificates! The village head expressed thanks on behalf of the whole community, stating: *Thank you for your help. Before the earthquake, we were lodged in quarters fit for animals, now we have houses worthy of human beings.*

A touching detail - gifts were presented to all those responsible for the project: ponchos, leather vests, woolen purses, etc., all made by the villagers themselves. It is interesting to note that the earthquake caused an abundant source of drinking water to surge in the area. God never abandons His children!

Rita Ostiguy, M.I.C.

and Elsewhere



Photo: Refugees, No. 117

The whole world longs for peace.

Towards a Culture of Peace

The culture of peace has come a long way in the ten years since the concept was launched by UNESCO and has become a guiding beacon for the entire United Nations system. Recognizing the importance of the Culture of Peace Program, the General Assembly has proclaimed the year 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace and of the years 2001-2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for Children of the World.

But why an International Year in the year 2000 and a Decade for a Culture of Peace? The new millennium is seen as a momentous opportunity for change. It is a new beginning, a time to map out a path to the future. Peace has to be cultivated and put into practice in our everyday lives. To assure this transformation, we must direct our efforts toward the transition from the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and nonviolence.

The culture of peace is no longer seen as the absence of conflict nor an affair of and between states. It is a question of values, attitudes, individual and collective behaviour that incarnate the spirit of peace. It gives our generation and those to come values that can inspire us to shape a world of dignity and harmony, a world of justice, solidarity, liberty and prosperity. By encouraging the mobilization of a range of participants from all walks of life, the United Nations and UNESCO take up their primary mission to assure and safeguard peace and security for all.

UNESCO SOURCES, Number 115



Photo: M.I.C.

Celebrating a millennium in Rome. Gloria Pérez, M.I.C. and Pauline Yuen, M.I.C.

The Jubilee City

On the occasion of each Jubilee, Rome has grown larger and has adorned itself to welcome the pilgrims. This year some 20 to 30 million pilgrims are expected. The Romans are mobilizing nearly 70,000 volunteers to extend a warm welcome. To study in Rome at this exceptional moment of the life of the Church is a privilege, affirm Gloria Perez, a Cuban M.I.C. and Pauline Yuen, a Chinese M.I.C.

Pilgrimage! Such is the keyword of my stay in Rome, admits Sr. Gloria. I have experienced it as setting out to encounter Someone - the One who has changed human history, the One who changed my personal history - Jesus. Thus have the places visited and the experiences lived out resounded deep within me. Visits of catacombs to rediscover the Church in its fragile and difficult beginnings. Then, our encounters with Pope John Paul II during solemn celebrations and of being in the midst of thousands of believers to celebrate our faith, to witness at what point the Church is universal. In Rome, I made a long and deep interior pilgrimage towards God, towards Christ and also towards others.

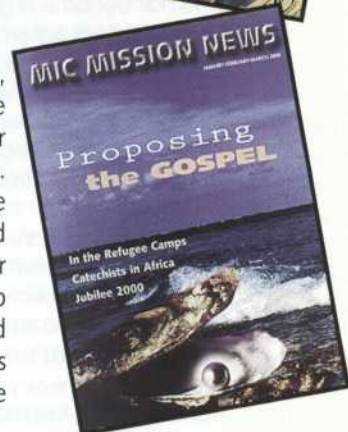
For Pauline Yuen, Rome is the crossroad for encounters. Rome brings people together, she affirms. It also unites them to their predecessors. The least corners of the city allow one to retrace the life of these believers whose sanctity and wisdom are overwhelming. I reflect a lot on the bonds that unite Christians together, to the importance of solidarity in the vast family that is the Church. No frontier of time, of culture, of language separates us. Presently, I am studying at the Gregorian Institute. I am experiencing the universality of the Church and I feel privileged to meet peoples of all cultures. For me, this year in Rome signifies encounter and friendship.

In Collaboration

Happy Anniversary

This year, our French publication, *Le Précurseur*, celebrates its 80 years of existence. The MIC Mission News (first published in 1923 as The Precursor), marks its 77th year. These anniversaries invite us to pay homage to the persons who bequeathed us with such a heritage of faith. In the first place, our foundress, Délia Tétreault, who launched, through countless difficulties, the first Canadian missionary magazine. This undertaking had been her dream since many years but financial resources and personnel were wanting to ensure a publication of its kind. It was a feat in itself to get it under way. When she sent out the first edition of the magazine to her missionaries in China, she explained that six M.I.C.s did nothing else but go from door to door to present the magazine and recruit subscriptions. With the years, the Sisters of *Le Précurseur* / The Precursor as they were often called, increased in number to visit the families and parishes throughout Quebec and neighbouring places, in cities as in the countryside. These visits effectively created bonds with the thousands of people who became aware of the mission of evangelization of the Church, of the work of missionaries in foreign lands and of their own missionary responsibility. Today, hundreds of lay persons are our partners to present the magazines in their own milieus.

We are indeed the beneficiaries of many generations of missionaries, of readers, of people committed to the edition or to the promotion of our magazines. The anniversaries we are celebrating recall a whole period of the history of our Institute, of the missionary history of Canada, and of the history of the mission. Let us thus render homage to the families, to the religious Communities, to the parishes and to their pastors who from one period of time to another, allowed our magazines to be put to the service of the mission. For, if the faces of our magazines have changed with the years, the objectives always remain actual: to open minds and hearts to the dimension of the world, to enhance sharing and solidarity with other peoples and sister-Churches, to favour interreligious dialogue. Long life to our magazines, at certain periods of their history quite different but ever appealing and fruitful. ●



With each publication, our correspondence, rich and diverse, gives witness to significant bonds created with our readers. One of them shares with us...

(...) About 1932-33, I recall having attended an M.I.C. departure at Windsor station in Montreal. Sister Marie-Emmanuel (Berthe Crevier) was leaving for Vancouver and was sailing on to China. It was perhaps also the departure of Sister Blandine Simard who died recently. Leaving at that same time was the priest who later became Bishop Ademar Lapierre, P.M.É.

Manchuria and Szepinkai were the two first Chinese words that we learnt as children... and when *Le Précurseur*/The Precursor reached our home, we quickly looked to find the photo of Aunt Berthe. In 1977, I had the privilege to travel to the Orient and to visit the M.I.C. schools at Good Hope and Tak Sun in Hong Kong. This explains why your magazine is for me a splendid family history!

Mrs. Marcelle Royal

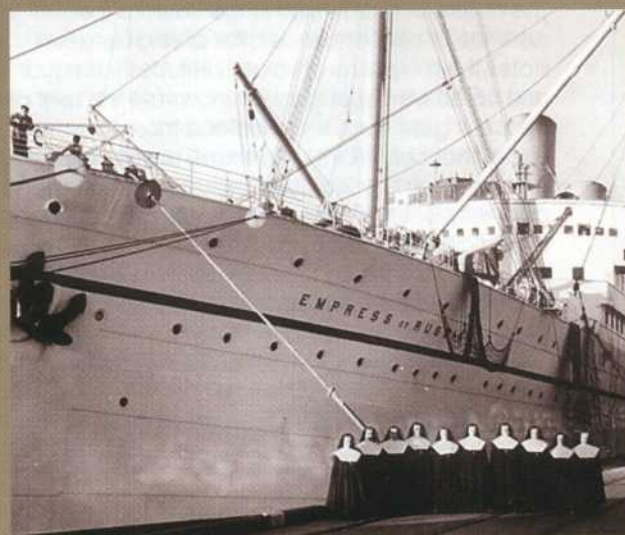


Photo: M.I.C.

In the Garden of God

Sister Jeannette Bouchard (Sister Saint-Isidore)

Jeannette was born on April 11, 1914 at St-Hilarion in the region of Charlevoix, Quebec. She was admitted to our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, on February 1, 1936. In 1939, she left for Vancouver where, during many years, she worked at our shelter for the poor and elderly persons of Asiatic origin. The task was no easy one as space was soon lacking due to the increasing number of sick people. Moreover, to succeed in providing food and care for all the residents seemed to require a miracle. The Sisters resorted to begging from door to door at the Chinese quarters to obtain the necessary provisions.



Having returned to Quebec in 1954, Sister Jeannette collaborated in many tasks at our closed retreat centres and different houses. Her remarkable talents as cook and seamstress were greatly appreciated. An unmatched hostess, her warm presence brought joy and comfort. Due to declining health, her last years were interrupted by many sojourns at the hospital. In 1999, she was admitted to our infirmary of Pont-Viau where she died suddenly on August 8, 1999. A woman of intuition and depth, Sister Jeannette lived her missionary life intensely.

Sister Marie-Reine Trudeau (Sister Marie-Reine)

Marie-Reine was born at Ste-Julie-de-Verchères, Quebec on April 19, 1909. At age 23, she joined our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. In 1933, her sister, Juliette, followed in her footsteps. As a young religious, Sr. Marie-Reine departed for Rome where she gave a helping hand to our Sisters who directed a small school in a poor district on the outskirts of the city. Ten years later she lived through the hard years of World War II: scarcity of food supplies, bombardments, the searching of premises by the police, since at the request of Pope Pius XII, the Sisters sheltered Jewish, Italian and Japanese families. Once the war ended, our Sisters opened a kindergarten in Rome which admitted close to 400 children. Sr. Marie-Reine collaborated generously in this endeavour.



After returning to Canada in 1953, she embarked into another important stage of her life at our Chinese Centre in Ottawa, the gathering place for Catholic Chinese families. Her involvement in the activities at the Centre was greatly appreciated: the welcoming of visitors, the caring for children, the preparation of traditional Chinese feasts. In 1986 she retired at Pont-Viau where she continued to serve selflessly. On August 19, 1999, she was called to her eternal reward. She lived 67 years in our midst, always happy to fulfill the mission God confided to her.

Sister Isabelle Éthier (Sister Saint-Vincent-Ferrier)

Isabelle was born in Montreal on December 4, 1911. She was admitted to our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, on the 8th of August, 1930. As a young religious she travelled through Quebec to offer our magazine, *Le Précurseur*, and visited schools for mission awareness. In 1949, after her studies at the School of Fine Arts, she departed for Japan. There she undertook the study of the language with enthusiasm and allowed herself to be permeated with the Japanese culture. During close to 20 years she taught painting and catechized a number of students who appreciated her talent and kindness.



In 1974, upon returning to Canada for her home leave, her services were required as layout artist for our mission magazines. She undertook a formation in this field. Later she became involved in multiple activities: adult education, visiting prisoners, parish encounters. In 1985, a paralytic stroke compelled her retirement at our house of Pont-Viau. During these years of intense suffering, her interior strength increased. She accepted her physical condition and made the spirit of thanksgiving the dominant note of her life. She died on November 8, 1999 at age 87.

Sister Hélène Ledoux (Sister Hélène-de-Jésus)

Helene was born at Spencer, Massachusetts, U.S.A., on August 15, 1912. She was 26 years of age when she joined our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. After completing her novitiate, she became involved in mission animation: she visited schools and promoted with zeal our magazines, *Le Précurseur* and *The Precursor*. Appointed to Chicoutimi, she showed great creativity in the organization of closed retreats. She enjoyed meeting people, she listened to them and got them interested in the mission.



In 1959, Sr. Helene departed for the Philippines where she kept busy with young boarders at a residence for students and taught catechesis during seven years. Upon returning to Canada in 1969, she was in charge of organizing the voyages for Sisters appointed to the missions and of the renewal of passports. Long were the hours she spent waiting in embassies, consulates or in travel agencies and airports. For a period of 18 years, she carried out this responsibility with great competence, efficiency and refined courtesy that characterized all her relationships. At the age of 84, she retired to our house in Pont-Viau. Her state of health declined very rapidly. She was called to her eternal happiness on November 18, 1999.

Sister Yvette Caron (Sister Alice-Yvette)

Yvette was born at St-Alexandre de Kamouraska, diocese of Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, on June 24, 1933. On August 8, 1958, she joined our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. During a number of years she practised her profession as a nurse and midwife in Malawi. She loved Africa and the warm hearts of its people. During her sojourns in her native land, she put her talents to use for the service of her M.I.C. companions, while always keeping an intense remembrance of her beloved country of adoption. The day came when she finally accepted the fact that she would never return to Africa.



For all the people who knew her, for the members of her family and for us, her M.I.C. Sisters, Sr. Yvette will always remain the woman who took her life in hand, the one who gave this life for the good of the afflicted, the one who struggled relentlessly, during three and a half years to preserve it. Then, in the course of the last three months, the one who assumed the arrival of her death with faith, serenity and dignity. She died at our house of Pont-Viau on January 12, 2000.

Sister Thérèse Guenette (Sister Thérèse-du-Saint-Sacrement)

Thérèse was born in l'Orignal, Ontario on October 15, 1913. After completing her studies, she taught school for five years. She loved teaching but she also felt strongly called to become a religious missionary. On August 8, 1935, she entered our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. As a young religious, she worked for nine years in mission animation before leaving for Hong Kong in 1947. Many tasks were in store for her since following World War II, our Tak Sun school, destroyed by bombardments, required to be reorganized by our missionaries as well as the opening of a new school in Kowloon.



From 1947 to 1975, Sr. Thérèse invested her talents first with the primary school boys at Tak Sun, and then with the girls of Good Hope kindergarten and primary school. Each year, the number of pupils increased and the task was overwhelming. Sr. Thérèse dedicated herself totally and her work was fruitful. The students succeeded well. She was greatly loved and appreciated by both children and parents. In 1975, she returned to Canada definitely due to her declining health condition. During several years again, she collaborated in various apostolic activities. In 1997, she retired at our infirmary of Pont-Viau where she passed away on January 14, 2000. Her joy, her gentleness, her missionary ardour marked profoundly the life of the persons whom she encountered.

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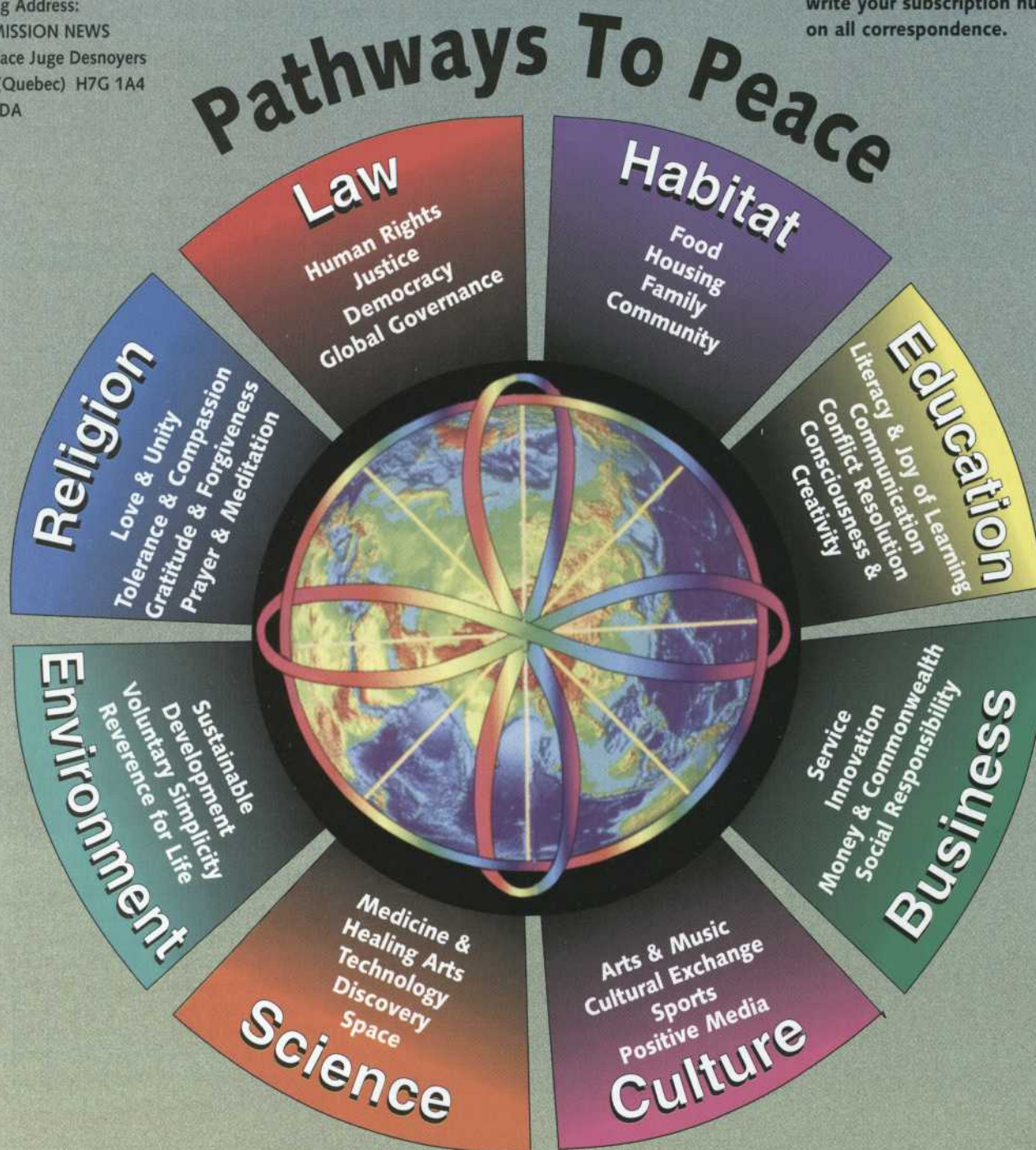
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