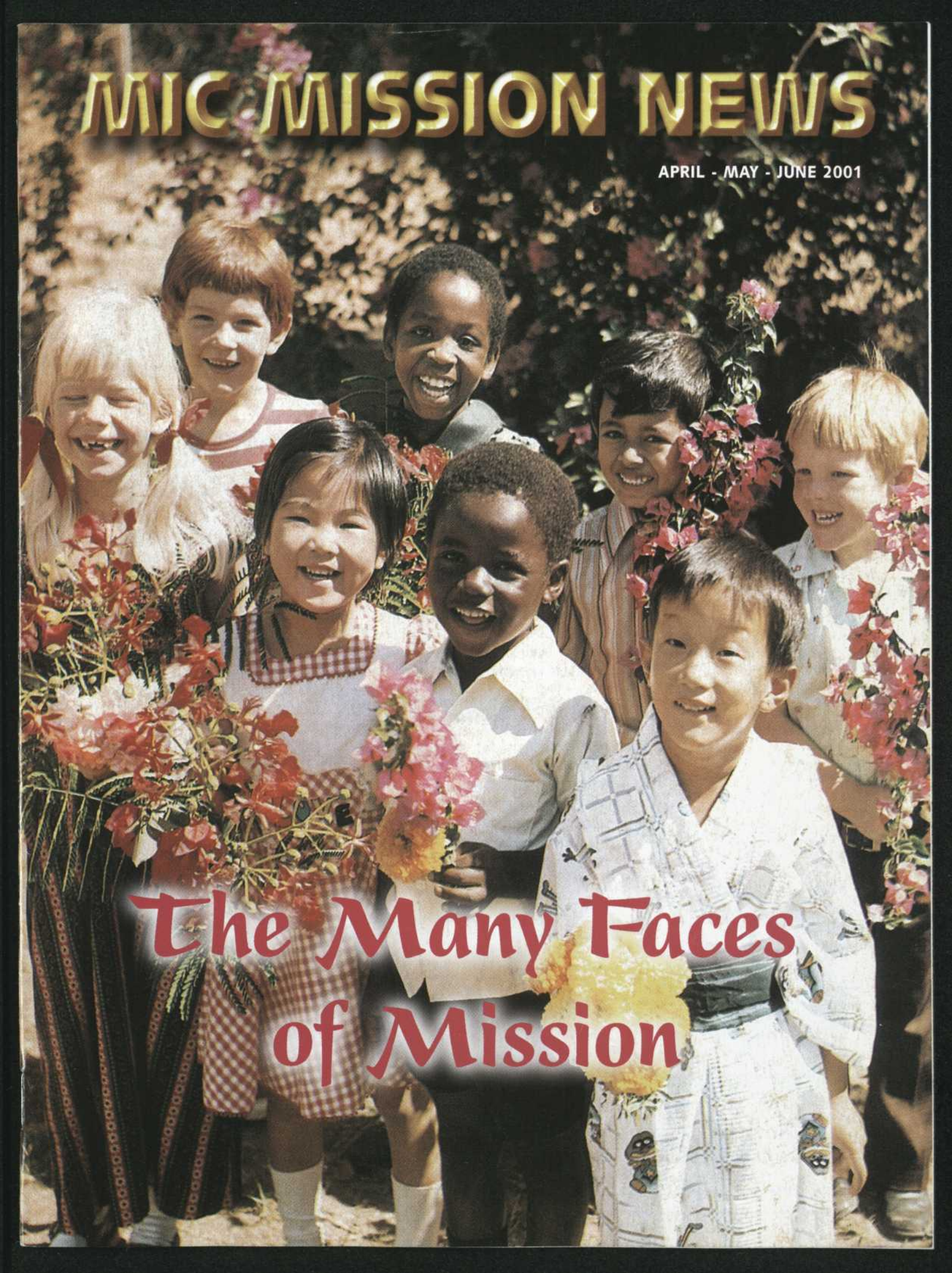


MIC MISSION NEWS

APRIL - MAY - JUNE 2001

A group of nine children of various ethnicities are smiling and holding bouquets of flowers. The children are arranged in two rows, with some standing slightly behind others. They are outdoors, with a background of dense foliage and flowers. The children are holding bouquets of red, pink, and yellow flowers. The text "The Many Faces of Mission" is overlaid on the bottom half of the image in a large, red, serif font.

*The Many Faces
of Mission*

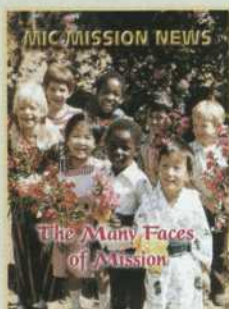


Photo: Moyo Magazine, Malawi

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Pastoral Counselling in Malawi



How Mysterious are Your Ways, Lord!



Sharing in the Life of the Atayals

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS 2001

April

That in Rwanda, the recently celebrated centennial of the Church may reinforce understanding among Christians and speed national reconciliation.

May

That the challenge of present-day urban culture may kindle in believers new missionary ardour in the cities.

June

That in Vietnam, Catholic citizens may be allowed to cooperate more towards the development of their country in cultural, educational and social welfare services.

A Bouquet of

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

Springtime is now at its best! This beautiful season and that of the coming feast of Pentecost offer us a vibrant invitation to be more attentive to God's presence in our life and to remain attuned to the promptings of His Spirit.

What better season of the year to celebrate the call to mission! To celebrate, especially, missionaries the world over as they respond to the call of Jesus *to go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation* (Mark 16:15).

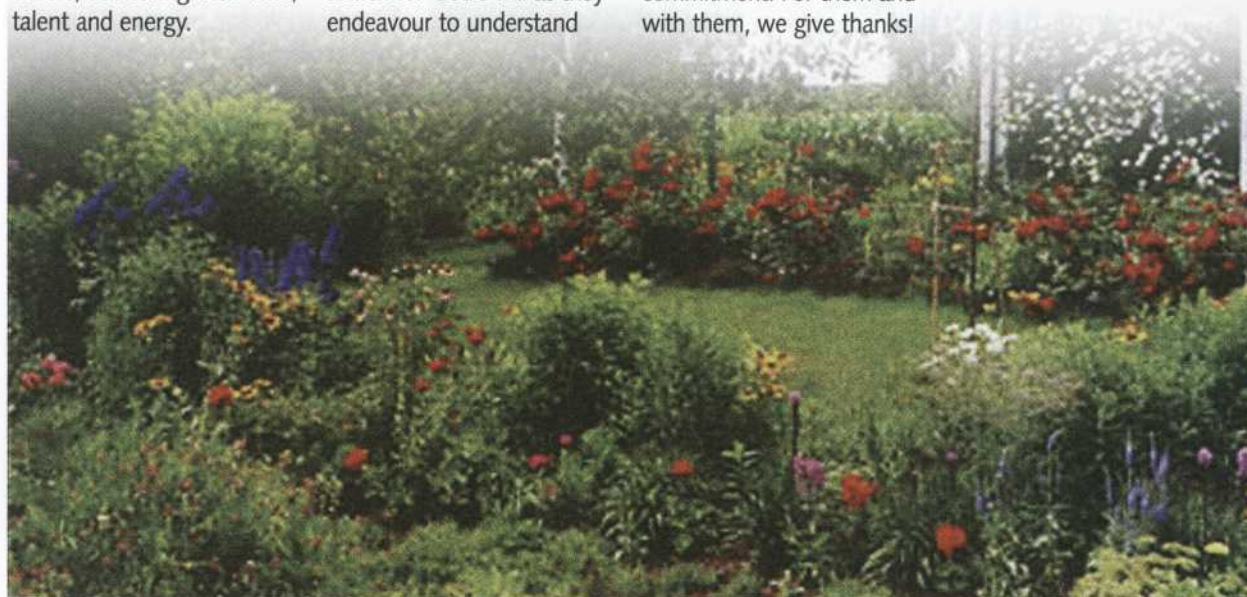
Imbued with an ardent desire to share the joy of tasting fully God's infinite goodness, they go wherever they are sent to witness to His presence among peoples. They willingly cross every border and barrier or minister in their homeland to share the Gospel with others, dedicating their time, talent and energy.

Thus it is particularly for the missionaries featured in this issue. A profound experience of an encounter with the Lord, risen and alive today, has set off each one of them on their unique and remarkable path to mission. For them, walking this path is a journey, one which is an expression of their personal history. That journey may have taken on many unexpected turns. Its ultimate destination may have been clear but their own steps leading to it were often faltering and tentative.

Following the inspiration of the Spirit, they strive to translate their missionary ideals into meaningful witnessing moments. They serve hopefully and live joyfully despite the limitations they may feel. Seeking ways of being faithful to the present moment, they search for God's will as they endeavour to understand

and follow it more closely. In the following pages, we catch glimpses of their journey of faith and their close relationship with the people among whom they work and live. We perceive how their lives continue to be filled with precious blessings, as new facets of the mission broaden their horizon and deepen their missionary commitment. For them and with them, we give thanks!

Blessings



Whatever you do
to my brothers or sisters
you do to me.
Matthew 25:40



In her ministry, Sr. Huguette allows herself to be guided by the words and gestures of Jesus.

By Huguette Ostiguy, M.I.C.

How valuable to be able to count on someone's help to get a clearer view of one's life and to improve one's being and commitment! The accompaniment of persons is at the heart of Sr. Huguette Ostiguy's present ministry on African soil.

I left for Zambia, Africa, in 1973. I was 30 years of age. I quickly immersed myself in the world of African women. At the Community Centre of Chikungu, the formation of young girls included literacy classes, courses in cooking, sewing, handicrafts, agriculture... and of course, religious education. For me, those were years of sharing the life and values of the people, years of intense work and marvellous discoveries. So, too, were the years I lived in Malawi, at the Marymount Secondary School of

Mzuzu. I was then matron of around 400 boarders, young girls called to play a vital role in the social transformation of their country. Since 1993, I have been working in counselling as part of a pastoral ministry of the Diocese of Mzuzu. Today, looking back at the path travelled, I see a continuous thread in my missionary journey: my presence among young people and women and my solidarity with them.

These commitments and my own personal growth have made me aware of the importance of the development of the person in all dimensions. More and more I realize the positive impact of psychological and spiritual maturity on the progress of the country and on the life of the Church in Africa. Effective leadership and faithful commitment are the outcome of a maturing process based on a harmonious psychological

Pastoral Counselling in Malawi

development. It allows the person to express and to live out moral and spiritual values.

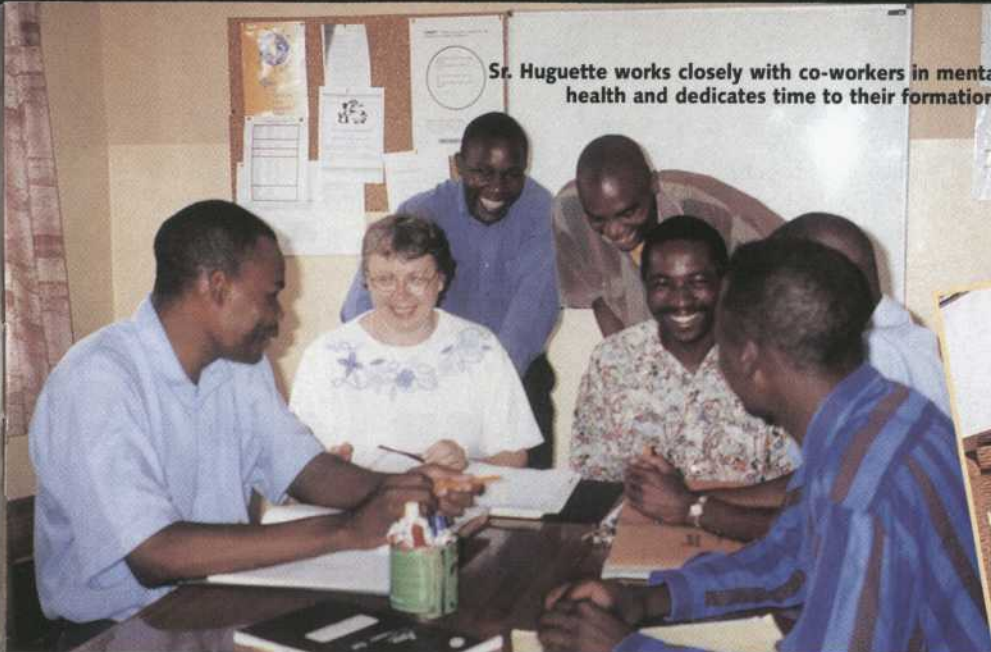
The Benefits of Pastoral Counselling

My studies in psychology and training in counselling are valuable assets enabling me to help other people find their path to a fuller life and to discover their own God-given mission. This process calls for listening to individuals and to groups. In doing so, I learn how best to sustain their growth in the context of their own cultural and social milieus, so different from that of my native land.

I offer sessions and accompany students and young religious. I realize how much Malawians desire to possess self-knowledge and to make progress in their personal growth. I have perceived this vibrant force of life which is inherent in every human being and which is capable of breaking through countless obstacles. I discover that the deep wounds and sufferings experienced and borne in silence are amazingly like those experienced elsewhere on our planet.

I also minister in line with the Association of Religious Institutes of Malawi (ARIMA). This organization is a venue of animation and dialogue for

Sr. Huguette works closely with co-workers in mental health and dedicates time to their formation.



the religious of Malawi. Preoccupied with the quality of life and the apostolic commitments of its members, ARIMA organizes intense periods of formation, among others, sessions in spirituality and in psychology. I am invited to work with different religious groups. What impresses me most during these encounters are the rich experiences shared by the participants and their earnest desire to be involved in a pertinent way in their respective milieu.

I am likewise a member of the multidisciplinary team at the *Mental Health Centre of Mzuzu*. This Centre includes a psychiatric unit attending to inpatients and an outpatient clinic which offers therapeutic accompaniment to persons, families and groups. In Africa, psychiatric illnesses are often linked to taboos and create fear among the family members of the patient. It is thus important to set up diverse networks of information and education designed to facilitate the reintegration of the patients in their home and work environments. Beyond ensuring this service, the Centre has set up workshops in arts and crafts for the benefit of the patients. Women learn sewing, crafts, etc. and men busy themselves with carpentry, shoe-repair and other trades. I accompany some of these patients in their journey and participate with my colleagues in the formation of mental health care workers.

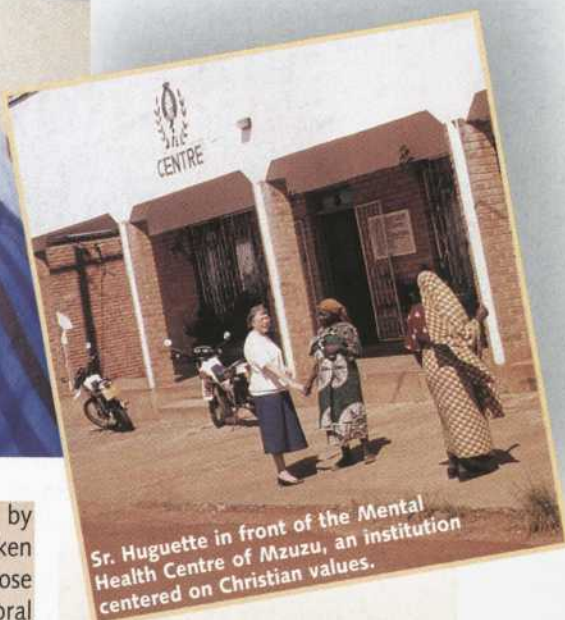
With the tragic situation created by AIDS in Malawi, counselling has taken an important role in helping those affected with the virus. Pastoral approaches are implemented to accompany the sick and family members with respect and compassion. This offers me yet another opportunity to lend a hand.

When Faith Sustains Personal Development

In my pastoral involvement, I marvel to see how people commit themselves

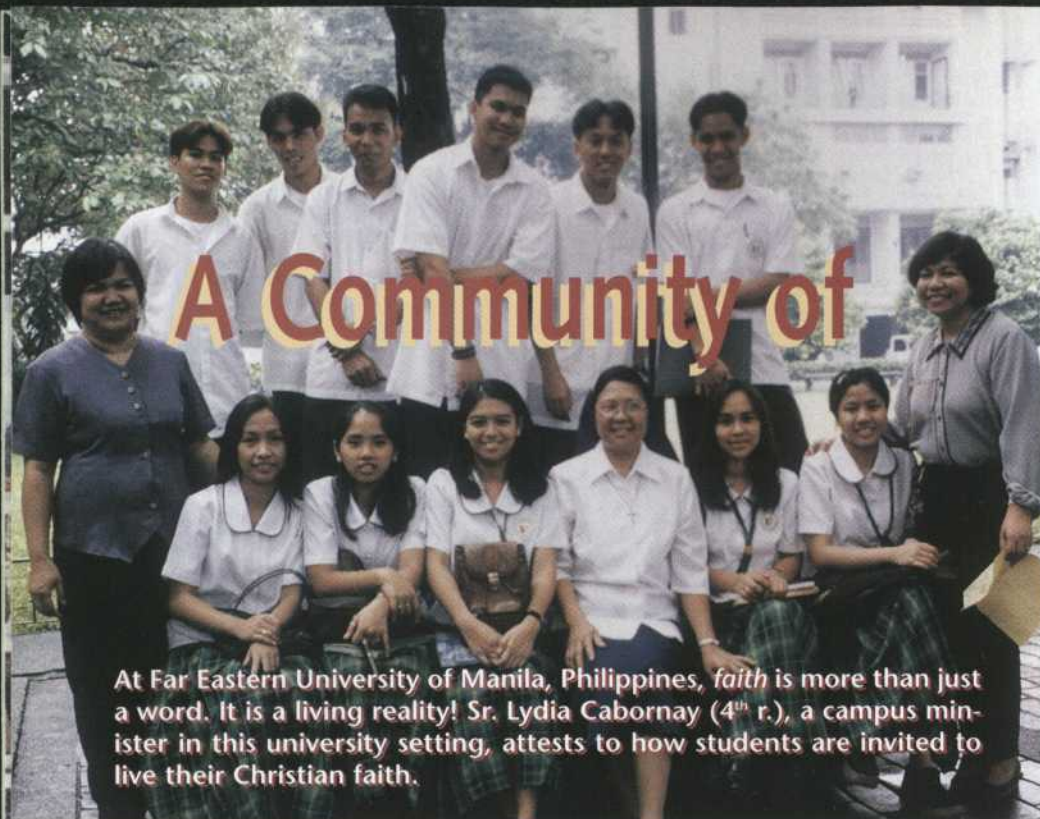
to their personal growth and to bring forth the best of their potentials. This enables them to be freed from fears and wounds that block their profound energies. They thus open up to encounter God and others and to take the risk of starting a new life. Is this not, for them and for me, a marvellous proclamation of the Good News? ●

Sr. Huguette in front of the Mental Health Centre of Mzuzu, an institution centered on Christian values.



A welcoming attitude and listening ears promote mutual respect and trust.

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



A Community of

Faith on Campus

At Far Eastern University of Manila, Philippines, *faith* is more than just a word. It is a living reality! Sr. Lydia Cabornay (4th r.), a campus minister in this university setting, attests to how students are invited to live their Christian faith.

By Lydia Cabornay, M.I.C.

Far Eastern University (F.E.U.) has nearly 75 years of existence. With an enrollment of around 24,000 students and a faculty and staff that count more than a thousand, it has become one of the largest universities in the country. Yet this private, non-sectarian institution situated in the heart of downtown Manila has grown neither too large nor too distant. The implementation of a *Campus Ministry Programme* concretizes its ongoing efforts to integrate faith and learning within its campus.

academic

education

mission

orientation

Creating Bonds of Christian Solidarity

In today's society, university students are given multiple responsibilities more than ever before. They are accountable to earn high marks, they must stay competitive for future employment. In many instances, a good number among them carry part-time jobs to finance their studies. These challenges leave very little time for personal reflection and spiritual growth. How can a non-sectarian university work toward the betterment of the whole person and not just fill the student with academics? How can it instill Gospel values and promote respect for the individual and solidarity with others? The Campus Ministry Programme centers on this important task. A pastoral initiative developed by the Archdiocese of Manila under the direction of Jaime Cardinal Sin, it aims to build within the university milieu, a caring community where Christian and Filipino values are a way of life. Religious and ordained campus ministers, subsidized by the Archdiocese, constitute the campus ministry team. The integral formation of lay leaders being a major element of this pastoral service, faculty and staff volunteers from the different departments assist in the smooth functioning of activities and projects.

At the Heart of Campus Ministry: Reflection and Service

Since our objective is to establish a Church presence in a non-sectarian university, our pastoral team ascertains to provide a sense of hospitality

to everyone in a spirit of a welcoming Christian community. The daily mass held on campus has become a special occasion to celebrate our faith together. More than just inviting the students to come to mass and pray, we accompany them in their day-to-day struggles. We talk about their problems at the university, at home, in our country and in their personal lives. We share their hopes for the future.

Our ministry takes on myriad ways: evangelization, liturgical celebrations, sacramental preparation and above all, quality presence... listening ears and compassionate hearts. The schoolyear includes various liturgies, retreats, workshops and seminars which encourage students and their mentors to evaluate the meaning of this particular season of their life. These activities allow the students to participate in the planning of school events which emphasize the mandate to serve and to help others.

Students are also particularly motivated to become aware of social justice issues. Through their actions as engaged members of the school community, they come to realize that they can make a difference - that they can have a considerable impact on their milieu, particularly in their own family. This approach helps to facilitate personal development, encourage student leadership and develop future leaders for Church and society.

Majority of the students come from the different provinces of the Philippines and belong to lower and middle income families. In general, they are enthusiastic about spiritual matters and committed to take part in campus ministry activities. All this, despite the fact that many among them are obliged to spend their free time in the library as a majority of them cannot afford to buy textbooks, or else they rush home after class hours to attend to household chores. To participate in activities held on non-school days incurs additional expenses. Nonetheless, through our pastoral services and activities, we hope to continue offering students a wide range of opportunities to help them reach their full potential.

The Road Travelled

Campus ministry has become an important part of the F.E.U. community. I am discovering more and more that this ministry plays a vital role in spreading God's message and that it allows me to live my M.I.C. vocation. Working at the university has given me countless opportunities to journey along with the students. I realize that the most effective way to instil values is to be present to others. I thus make certain to spend time getting to know the students. I am constantly amazed at them - the depth of their insight, the magnitude of their generosity and kindness. We have grown a great deal together. In many ways, they have shown me how to trust the Lord's loving Providence and how to live the Gospel simply and with great love. ●

faith & life
integration

social
transformation



Frequent encounters with students are a priority for Sr. Lydia (1st row, 1st r.).

Photos: M.I.C., Philippines



Vietnam. Quang Tri. Sr. Jacqueline offers a course on management to women responsible for small enterprises.

Jacqueline Villemure, M.I.C., holds a doctorate in management and works as a consultant in international development. For ten years, she has travelled between Montreal and Shijiazhuang, China, as part of a cooperative project on health and business. Since 1994, she has been involved in a management training programme for women groups in Vietnam. She relates how she was led to these commitments and what inspired them.

Is not the future full of surprises? Is it not true that, every once in a while, the signs of the times wreak havoc with our certainties? And is it not that at the hour of important choices to make, the feeling of having made oneself available to do the will of God brings peace and satisfaction? The Lord leads us, step by step, in mysterious ways. Keeping myself as available as possible to the working of the Spirit, I have many times, as you undoubtedly have, given my deliberate assent to God's plans, taking the steps that seemed required of me and

How Mysterious are Your Ways, Lord!

By Jacqueline Villemure, M.I.C.

posing the responsible gestures. Every new choice invited me to reassess my situation with regard to the mission and launched me into a new adventure. Each new step taken was made a part of the same dynamic thrust, and as I look back, I cannot but cry out: *How wonderful are your works, O Lord, how unfathomable indeed are your plans!*

Needs and Projects that Proved Challenging

In 1973, I was assigned to the Montreal Chinese Hospital to administer it and to promote its development. My commitment to the mission in Quebec seemed to preclude mission outside the country. But in the 80s,

consisted in reorganizing the health care services of the military hospital of Shijiazhuang and in offering training sessions in management. But over the years, the demand for contracts subsided; then, a short-lived project in China led to my being made an unexpected offer: to train a group of women leaders of the Communist party in Vietnam.

Vietnam is a Communist country as is China, and more than a thousand years of Chinese influence have shaped its social fabric. Looking at it more closely, I discovered in this project a continuity of the same mission of wit-

China set out towards a socialistic economy. The opening created by its reorganization challenged me so convincingly that I pursued my studies in preparation to set out, like our very first missionaries, to work in the vast and beautiful land of China. As part of a joint Canada-China project, I thus travelled through this country for a period of ten years. The project



China. Sr. Jacqueline and management personnel visit a hospital in view of a formation project.



nessing and sharing: by communicating management skills and a vision of human beings inspired by the Christian faith. Hence, in 1994, I became involved with Rosemont College of Montreal in an initial project of four years called *Women and Employment, a Training Programme*. The purpose was to reinforce the management skills of the leaders of the *Union of Women of Vietnam*, a party organization operating on the national and provincial levels. The poverty of means offered to women is deplorable... their thirst for fuller life so great...

Since 1999, my second commitment in Vietnam is with the proficiency training programme, *Women and Rural Development*. To conserve the impetus of its economic reform, the government declared as a national priority the proficiency of human resources and focused formation efforts towards the cities and industrial centres. The *Union of Women of Vietnam*, representing 80 % of the members living in the countryside, has decided for its part, to target the women from rural areas.

My work consists in providing them with formation on personnel, financial and material management. It



Courses offered by Sr. Jacqueline allow Vietnamese women to step into important economic sectors.

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



Photo: ACDI

and men accustomed to authoritarian regimes thus appreciate being made aware of the human dimensions of their management work. They spontaneously express their appreciation for having been introduced to this approach.

I am happy to know that my work is in line with the recommendations of the *International Conference for Women* held in Beijing, China in 1994. This important gathering in which I participated, requested, among other things, to intervene in important economic sectors and in formation so as to improve the situation of women. It also extended the call to work actively with women's organizations to have a greater impact in society. To be able to allow other women to live in dignity, to be more autonomous, to participate in decisions in diverse enterprises - that for me is a great blessing. That is to work toward building a better world. What will the future be for me and for those with whom I work? I have no idea. But what I do know is that tomorrow will be good, because I know I will find the Lord once again along my way. ●

Impact of these Experiences

These projects have enabled me to live beautiful experiences of human solidarity and to create links of friendship with persons of other cultures. To maintain relationships of respect, of understanding and confidence is a priority in my work. Economic performance could never be my only criterion of action. To heighten the desire to share with others, to humanize enterprises... this enduring development is what I aim at. Women

THE IMPACT OF A PHOTO

By Micheline Laguë, M.I.C.

A professor in theology, Micheline Laguë, M.I.C., has been teaching at Saint Paul's University in Ottawa for the past 25 years. Her doctoral dissertation, centering on thanksgiving in the letters of Saint Paul, has led her to discover the foundation of a spirituality which she shares in her writings and in her courses. She retraces here the calls that have directed her towards this way of living out her missionary vocation.



Oftentimes, when people learn that I am a professor of Theology at Saint Paul's University in Ottawa, they manifest their astonishment. *How come? ... A missionary who carries out her commitment on Canadian soil? Isn't the primary purpose of one engaged in a missionary community to serve the Mission in other countries?* Their reaction is understandable. It is in keeping with the widespread image of the sister who leaves her country for the sake of the Gospel and goes out to a people whose culture and beliefs are totally different from her own. An image quite well spread towards the end of the 50s and which, in fact, has been a determining factor in the choice of my orientation in life.

The Call to Religious Missionary Life

I must have been 16 or 17 when a photograph awakened my dream to become a missionary in Africa. It was the picture of a sister dressed all in white, wearing a colonial hat and travelling on horseback across the countryside to a small remote village. At that specific moment I felt at one with her, and I sensed the happiness that must have been hers as she proclaimed the Gospel to people eager to know Jesus, the Christ. I perceived an interior call to which I instantly responded: *One day I will be a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception.* A few years later, I entered the Novitiate.

The Call to Theology

Later, a second call was to orient my missionary life towards my present commitment. It happened during my formation years. At that time, my studies in religious science were for me a period of discovery. I was strongly attracted to research and especially to theology. The call to this field of study became especially strong. It coincided with the need I felt to make a research on the Biblical foundation of thanksgiving, a spirituality so dear to Délia Tétreault, our Foundress.

This vocation to theology is rooted in my being a religious missionary. A calling which is in fact, part and parcel of the primary aim of our Institute: to proclaim the Good News of God in Jesus Christ in a spirit of thanksgiving. Actually, in my teaching, I am given the opportunity to consider every aspect of the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman: *If you only knew the*



Sr. Micheline (at centre), on the occasion of a graduation ceremony

Gift of God (Jn 4:10). To know the gift of God means to recognize Christ as the One who reveals God, the One who accomplishes definitively the Alliance of God with humanity - the first and fundamental reason for thanksgiving, if any! The joy of knowing Christ gives rise to the desire to share that joy. It thus gives one the urge to go to all parts of the world, including one's own country.

In these times of spiritual revival manifested by the quest for self and for God, does it not respond to one of the demands of the Mission to reach out to people and present ways that will help them to be enlightened in their spiritual thirst? To devote time and energy to probing the major questions of human life in the light of the Word of God is an essential task which I am privileged and happy to perform. I accomplish this task by giving lectures about God, about Mary, about grace and by offering courses in Christian spirituality, particularly on the spirituality of thanksgiving. Courses where connections are established with aspects of psycho-spiritual maturity. This approach is very effective with many students as it enables them to discover a little better who they are, and by that very fact, to get a glimpse of what path to follow in order to become more fully the human beings they are meant to be.

To Live the Mission in a Spirit of Thanksgiving

Who could have predicted that one aspect of the heritage of Délia Tétreault - the Mission lived in a spirit of thanksgiving - would have such an unexpected and widespread influence in the context of a university setting? Indeed, at Saint Paul's University, which has become a real crossroad of nations, the spiritual heritage of Délia Tétreault that I share in my teaching touches men and women from different continents. This heritage now bears fruits in forms then undreamt of at the time of the foundation of our Institute a century ago and adjusts itself to the renewed concept of the Mission of the Church. A Mission which is not to be defined by means of geographic boundaries but more in relation with human milieus.

Délia Tétreault loved to repeat that there is no place nor circumstance where an M.I.C. may not live out the Mission. She thus expressed the main purpose intended by the missionary action of the Institute which she founded: *To give God children, chosen ones who will also sing praise to Him forever for His kindness. How great and beautiful is this vocation!* The wonderment expressed by Délia Tétreault, I made it mine a long time ago! ●



Sr. Micheline Laguë (1st row, at centre) and her students in Theology

Along Mission Routes...

Lord, accompany on their mission those who are leaving in Your name to proclaim Your Gospel. Through their witness, their friendship and their presence,

*may those in need of comforting be comforted;
may those seeking peace find it;
may those wishing to give thanks be enabled to do so;
and may each one return to his or her own home
with the joy of having met You,
who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.*¹



Eulalia Loreto, M.I.C.
from Davao,
Diocese of Davao, Philippines

Sr. Eulalia has been a missionary in Taiwan since 1990. Having returned to Guanshi last November, she fulfills various administrative tasks and also teaches catechism, English and music to young people of the parish. Her contribution to the ministry among the immigrants is much appreciated, especially among the Filipino factory workers.



Laurette Gauvin, M.I.C.
from Ste-Catherine-de-la-Jacques-Cartier,
Diocese of Quebec

In Malawi since 1962, Sr. Laurette has worked mostly at the integral formation of women of rural areas and at the development of Christian communities in the villages. Since her return to Africa last December, she is now at our formation house of Chipata, Zambia, where young African women are being initiated to the missionary religious life.



Adelaida Santiago, M.I.C.
from Sampaloc,
Diocese of Manila, Philippines

Sr. Adelaida has been working in Peru since 1986. In Yauri, in the Cuzco, she was involved in various educational projects among women and prisoners. Subsequently, in Lima, she took charge of the administration of the *Colegio Maria de la Providencia*, and then, of the formation of young M.I.C. Sisters. Back in Lima since November, she now serves as Provincial Bursar.



Claire Desrochers, M.I.C.
from St-Charles-de-Mandeville,
Diocese of Joliette

For more than 30 years, Sr. Claire was fully involved in the education of young women from rural areas, both in Peru where she arrived in 1960, and in Bolivia where she spent seven years. Sr. Claire went back to Peru in January 2001 and is currently at the M.I.C. Novitiate of Moyabamba, where she is part of the formation team for the novices from Chile, Peru and Bolivia.



Anita Perron, M.I.C.
from St-Isidore d'Auckland,
Diocese of Sherbrooke

Sr. Anita returned to Bolivia last December. A missionary in that country since 1969, she first worked among the families of the miners of Catavi; then, in Pucallpa, she became secretary of the Mission Department of the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bolivia*. The formation of catechists and the vocation ministry are main concerns of her pastoral commitment among the youth studying at the *Institute of Rural Education*, at the secondary school and at the University of Cochabamba.



Noëlla Fréchette, M.I.C.
from St-Apollinaire,
Diocese of Quebec

Sr. Noëlla first worked in Malawi. Transferred later on to Chipata, Zambia, she directed a rehabilitation centre for the handicapped, which enabled many young people to learn various trades and to look to the future with confidence. Since her return to Zambia in January 2001, Sr. Noëlla works at *St. Anne's Centre* of Chipata, a leadership and development training school for young women of the area.

Jacqueline Vachet, M.I.C.
from Nominigüe,
Diocese of Mont-Laurier

Sr. Jacqueline went back to Africa where she has worked since 1977. A nurse specialized in obstetrics, she has been directing the Health Centre of Kanyanga, Zambia, for 16 years. Besides providing all the services of a small hospital, the Centre is responsible for preventive care and sanitary education in the district. It also has a well equipped maternity ward and sets up long-term care for children suffering from malnutrition.



Petronila Chira, M.I.C.
from Piura,
Diocese of Piura, Peru

Sr. Petronila is a native of Peru. In Chile, where she spent two years to deepen her formation in religious missionary life, she was involved in pastoral work in an urban parish. Last January, after a period of intensive study of English, she left for Zambia. She will be working with the midwife/nursing staff at the Health Centre of Kanyanga. She currently devotes her time to learning Chitumbuka, the local language..



Rita Ostiguy, M.I.C.
from L'Ange-Gardien,
Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe

Assigned to Bolivia in 1971, Sr. Rita devoted several years to the education of young people in Cochabamba and in La Paz. She also lived nearly eight years among the peasants of Huancarani, a small village of the Andes, where she engaged in the development and Christian formation of rural communities. In January 2001, she went back to Cochabamba and presently works at the *Centro de Apoyo Integral Carcelario*, a day care centre for the children of prisoners.



Josselaine Audate, M.I.C.
from Terrier-Rouge,
Diocese of Cap-Haitien, Haiti

A missionary in Peru since 1990, Sr. Josselaine has worked mostly in family catechesis, an important ministry for the religious education of young people. After a short stay in Haiti, she left for Chile last January. In Santiago, she pursues studies in Theology and is also involved in parish work. She will be returning to Peru where she will resume her pastoral work in the new mission that will be given to her.



Léontine Lang, M.I.C.
from Clair,
Diocese of Edmunston, N.B.

Sr. Léontine has worked in Africa since 1977. At Chipata, Zambia, she took charge of the diocesan bookstore and worked at the elaboration of catechetical materials adapted to the local culture. Later appointed to Mzuzu in Malawi, she produced, with the help of local artists, diverse projects for the decoration of the cathedral as well as for the Marymount Secondary School chapel. As of last March, she returned to Malawi where she is setting up a bookstore for the diocese of Mzuzu.



Rita Guay, M.I.C.
From Montreal
Diocese of Montreal

Sr. Rita's first departure for Africa took place in 1959. She worked at the integral formation of young African girls at *St. Anne's Centre* in Chipata, Zambia. During eight years, she was also responsible for the *Family Encounter Movement*. Later, she gave formation sessions to young religious of Zambia and Malawi. Having returned to Chipata last March, she assumes the same ministry and collaborates in the formation of young M.I.C. religious.

1- Adapted text: J. Eyquem, O.P.

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Life as a Blessing



By André Beauchamp

Have you ever noticed that, for people over 30 or 40, real life is somewhat unlike the life they had planned or envisaged? Luke studied music, but ten years later he's on the executive of an industrial company. Manon graduated in nursing, but she ended up opening a women's boutique. And so on. To make a start in life, you need initial training, but then, the rest is the result of so many unpredictable circumstances that one finally wonders if we shape our own lives or if it is not life itself that shapes us. Sometimes things happen by fate: an accident, an encounter, an illness. Sometimes it is a major reaction to something, or else a major thrust from the heart that makes us pick up the phone, or write a letter, or accept to meet someone. And, one thing after another, everything is changed.

How many couples celebrating their twenty-fifth or thirtieth anniversary candidly admit that their married life has been nothing like the dreams of their youth. It has been harder, more complicated than they expected. Trials have happened that were not supposed to happen. Take, for instance, that fire... that strike... that unplanned birth. Sometimes, a disabled child has upset all their dreams. Or a personal weakness to which they thought they were totally immune, the specter of alcoholism, an almost endless deviance. The reverse can also be true: everything may have been easier than expected. They have kept themselves in good health, have never been unemployed, and their days and years have flowed along like water between the shores of a peaceful river. Life has gone its own merry way.

When looking back at their lives, it seems that people rarely regret anything, even when their journey has been a difficult one. The reason is that, when all is said and done, reality has been the only truth. It has taken all these highs and lows, all these struggles and tensions, all these obstacles for us to finally know who we are and to bring our whole potential to fruition. We catch ourselves saying, like singer Edith Piaf whose life was such an upheaval: *No, nothing at all, no, I regret nothing.*

This is not to say that evil is good or that our mistakes were good deeds. It simply means that we live in a world of grace in which failure can be transfigured in the end. *O happy fault which gained for us so great a Redeemer*, chants the Exultet. Paul the Apostle cried out in a flight of lyric poetry, that he and his companions are thought of as *although saddened, always glad; seeming poor, but making many people rich; seeming to have nothing, yet really possessing everything.* 2 Cor. 6:10.

Every life is unique, every adventure personal. Every accomplished destiny represents such a surprise even for its own subject.

*Do not be surprised that I say: You must all be born again from above.
The wind blows where it will and you hear the sound it makes,
but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.
So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.
He who acts in truth comes into the light.* Jn 3:7,8,21

Our life is often simply a ship which the Spirit constantly steers to the high seas until it reaches the other shore of life. All in all, isn't it true that to learn how to live means to receive our life as a blessing, a gift we never cease to appreciate? ●



Photo: Yves Demers Paris

Sharing

in the Life of the Atayals



A small Atayal church in the hollow of the mountains



Srs. Françoise Larouche and Rossina Bautista in front of their residence at Shuitien



A prayer celebration tinted with local colours

By Françoise Larouche, M.I.C.

In Taiwan, Rossina Bautista, M.I.C. and Françoise Larouche, M.I.C. live among the Atayals, one of nine aboriginal groups on the Island. Through their pastoral service, the missionaries express their deep sense of solidarity with this people who struggle to preserve their ethnic identity.

What immediately comes to mind when thinking of Taiwan is often its economic performance, especially in the textile and electronic industries, or else, its hectic lifestyle, fine cuisine, fascinating landscapes and rich culture. Yet there exists another reality which is often ignored: that of the aboriginal tribes.... Peoples whose language, cultural and religious traditions are very rich. Being the first inhabitants of Taiwan, the aborigines have developed a way of life in harmony with their environment, depending on the produce of the earth

and of the sea. But the Chinese immigration which took place in successive waves for nearly 500 years drastically changed their way of life. They were gradually compelled to retreat to the mountains and to adjust to a life of hardship, extracting from the earth the essential elements of their nourishment. Today, the economic boom, the unusually rapid modernization of the country and the massive migration to the cities make it even more difficult for them to make a living. The same factors also make their cultural heritage more vulnerable. Thousands of them have moved to the urban centres in search of work. They have had to struggle to live according to their traditions and values. Many have encountered alienation and discrimination. Their history and their struggle are very similar to those of the native peoples of Australia, the United States, Canada and of Latin America.



Baptism of a child by Father Olivier Landinois, S.J.

Dynamic Christian Communities

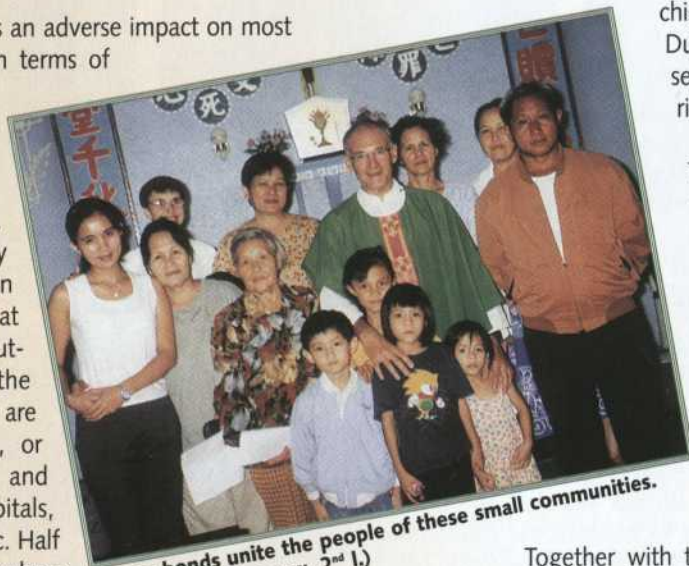
The pastoral district of Chienshih, where we work, totals five parishes regrouping some 450 Catholic families within 16 villages scattered along the mountain range. These families were initiated in the Christian faith around the 50s and 60s. The pastoral team of Chienshih includes three European Jesuit priests, four Atayal catechists and four Sisters of different nationalities and congregations.

I reside in Shuitien with Sr. Rossina. She is co-responsible for the pastoral animation of this parish. On my part, I serve the Christian communities of Yufeng, Shuitien and Chinsan, which

obliges me to make several trips through the mountainous region. As there is no bus service in the area, I travel by truck with one of our catechists or else on motorcycle. During the rainy or typhoon seasons, this becomes a rather risky trip.

The Struggle for Survival

This difficult situation has an adverse impact on most Atayal men, especially in terms of finding regular employment. They thus go from one job to another in construction, trucking and other trades. Then, for a month or two, they go back to their homes in the mountains and work at rebuilding roads and cutting wood. Most of the women, for their part, are employed as domestics, or else work in factories and social institutions: hospitals, homes for the elderly, etc. Half of Atayal families among whom we work depend on the salaries of widows or are on social assistance. In Yufeng and in Shihlei, there are mostly young families with 4, 5, 6 or more children. They live on the cultivation of vegetables and fruits, but their income diminishes considerably with government importation of foreign goods. Only a small number of Atayals receive a regular salary like police officers, school teachers, nurses, government clerks, etc. Most of the elder members receive money from their children working in the cities.



Strong bonds unite the people of these small communities.
Sr. Françoise (last row, 2nd l.)

The Atayal communities are vibrantly alive and bear witness to a deep faith. There is great joy in praying and growing together in the Christian life. The people are taking charge at every level of parish life: celebration, administration, maintenance, visit of the elderly and of families in difficulty.

Together with the catechists and the local pastoral teams, we prepare the Sunday liturgy and catechism classes on the sacraments. We work quite closely with the parents and the youth. Special emphasis is placed on the catechesis for children. The mothers are taught so that they can then teach the children in the parish. We give a lot of importance to this formation. I also visit the families, paying special attention to the neediest, the elderly and the sick. The people are rich in human values. They are very hospitable, profoundly generous and of a great simplicity. They love to party, to sing



Msgr Chien Tsz Dzeng of the Paiwan tribe,
first aboriginal bishop of Taiwan

and to dance. The great liturgical feasts, the baptisms and weddings, the anniversaries of the Christian community are opportunities for them to express the richness and beauty of their culture. Life bursts out!

A Sense of Pride and Privilege

Indeed Sr. Rossina and I are both happy and privileged to provide pastoral and educational service in the midst of the Atayals. We have the joy of sustaining their faith and of contributing towards the building of Christian communities where this faith can grow and be. At the heart of this wonderful mission are the love and respect for the Atayal culture, the desire also to better understand and appreciate it. Having experienced a great deal of discrimination in the past, many of these people have suffered and lost their self confidence. We help them develop a positive outlook on their cultural heritage in order to enhance their self-esteem and personal pride. We desire to accompany them in their efforts to build a Church that reflects the wealth of their culture and spirituality. ●



Photos: M.I.C. Taiwan



During gatherings, everyone gives a hand.

The offering of incense to ancestors is a custom integrated in the Eucharistic liturgy.

News from Here



Sr. Keiko Hasegawa (1st row, 2nd l.), shares the joys and sorrows of Filipino families.

AMONG THE FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS

Keiko Hasegawa, M.I.C., was a missionary in the Philippines for nearly three years. Having returned to Japan, she has been a public relations agent at the Embassy of the Philippines in Tokyo for the last 12 years. Her presence and service in this ministry facilitate communication with the Japanese immigration personnel and the different environments in which the Filipinos work and live. Supported by the *Department of Work and Employment* responsible for the social security of Filipino immigrants, Sr. Keiko is able to assist these workers when they are caught up in various problems concerning their legal status, passport, health insurance, etc. She renders multiple services in response to their needs and accompanies them in the varied challenges they have to surmount so as to live and work in a culture different from their own. Her understanding and empathy bring them comfort. *I have the opportunity to help many people, she says. They have risked everything to come and work in Japan. Many have come here illegally and have no social protection whatsoever. Hence a multitude of problems: false papers, low wages, clandestine marriages... I welcome them as Christ asks me to do... I am convinced that this is how the Kingdom of God is being built.*

There are approximately 150,000 Filipino workers in Japan. Their significant contribution to the economic growth of the country cannot be ignored. Moreover, they are a real blessing for the Japanese Church. They arrive, bringing with them a deep and missionary faith. Attentive to the needs of immigrants all over the world, the Church of the Philippines calls on the hosting Churches to develop a ministry to the immigrants in order to protect the workers and their families. In 1998, eighty-three delegates of these Churches met in Manila to explore all the possibilities Churches and immigration agencies have so that effective assistance may be offered to these people. It is a question of solidarity and of sharing.

The Editing Team



Sr. Françoise Royer and her little Lebanese friends

IN PRISON AT ROUMIEH...

At the time I left Montreal for Lebanon in November 1999, a humanitarian mission awaited me in Roumieh, a prison on the outskirts of Beyrouth, where nearly 3,500 prisoners live. They are charged with or condemned for drug trafficking, terrorism, theft, assassination, etc. The lack of water, of food, of medicine, and the overpopulation of cells and facilities jeopardize the health and dignity of the inmates. The local *Association for Justice and Mercy* (AJEM) has been working for two years to improve their living conditions and hopes to do more through its medical programme. I work in this area in my capacity as a nurse. Founded and directed by the Anthonian Fathers, the AJEM has among its members some forty Lebanese professionals, most of them volunteers.

Every day except for weekends, I pass through the three gates rigorously guarded by police before reaching one of the buildings where the dispensary is located. The latter consists of a consultation room for the physician and a treatment room. I work with a Lebanese volunteer nurse and three prisoners. The latter are not nurses, but they know the essentials of the care to be given. We receive approximately 130 to 150 patients per day. They come in small groups and are of all ages, nationalities, religions and languages. I speak English or French. One prisoner serves as Arabic interpreter. I attach great importance to the dignity of the inmates. A smile, a handshake, a gesture of friendship to express the welcome and tenderness of God. This mission among prisoners is an opportunity for me to meet people who have the courage to look at their lives and to say how much they hunger for love. Confident that they will pull through in spite of all, they do what it takes to put their lives together again. I am profoundly moved by this. Others are going through darker moments. They seem to be either crushed by their suffering or driven to revolt. In the face of their anguish, I feel extremely powerless and all I can do is be silent and pray. I keep unforgettable memories of the prisoners of Roumieh.

Françoise Royer, M.I.C

N.B. Sr. Françoise is presently at Deir El-Ahmar in the northeastern part of Lebanon for another humanitarian service.

and Elsewhere ...



With the handicapped of Madagascar

SERVING THE HANDICAPPED

A lay missionary associated with our M.I.C. Community, Nathalie Genest has been living in Madagascar for the last two years. Her letters reveal what inspires and enriches her life. *In Morondava, I work in a Centre for the physically and mentally handicapped. Religious Sisters of the Community of Jeanne de Lanoue administer this Centre. I teach with one of the Sisters and visit the families to accompany the children who cannot be received at the Centre. I quickly discovered how much I feel at home with values upheld by the L'Arche, even though it is not yet established here. I give thanks for the richness of each encounter, for the privilege of friendships received. For example, in spite of her disability, Laurencia manages to make herself understood: she pushes me away if she does not want to come with me, or she pulls me towards herself in the opposite case. I am transformed into a student learning a lesson before the perpetual smile of Patricia and her sense of wonder, before Sara who greets everyone without exception. And what can I say of Nico, Piera, Nirry and so many others! I could relate countless anecdotes, delightful moments that make me happy to be here.*

My great desire is that people come to see the beauty of the handicapped so that they may be considered full-fledged persons, who of course need to receive, but who also have something to give. Activities are being initiated in Morondava to lay the foundations in this respect and to improve the living conditions of the handicapped: awareness activities in schools, special education classes, setting up of parents' committees and of a respite service for them... I keep thinking of what could be done and that I am unable to do, for example, to offer physiotherapy that would enable Patricia to walk. I feel my littleness and my lack of some of the required qualifications. My personal challenge is to accept the call God directs to me rather than insist on what could be done. I give thanks for what He carries out through me... That is my mission in Madagascar!

Nathalie Genest



Volunteers working at the M.I.C. Health Services
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C. (standing, 3rd l.)

2001: YEAR OF VOLUNTEERS

The United Nations declared 2001, the *International Year of Volunteers*. This is a unique opportunity to pay homage to the millions of volunteers worldwide who have chosen to use their time and talents in the service of their community. It is also an invitation to discover the true face of volunteerism: its contribution, the services offered, the networks of assistance created over the years and the suggested ways to become involved. This initiative proposed by the government of Japan gained the support of 123 States. In most countries, including Canada, a national committee of the *International Year of Volunteers* has the mandate to set up projects that will show volunteers at work and give people the desire to get involved.

Seven and a half thousand Canadians engage themselves freely in a variety of activities and projects that respond to the needs of society. Here in Pont-Viau, Laval, at the *Délia Tétreault Pavilion* of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, a volunteer service was opened last year. It is an essential complement to the work of the management and staff of the *M.I.C. Health Services* whose aim is to provide quality of life to our sick and aging sisters. The involvement of lay people in this ministry is in line with the initiative taken by our Foundress, *Délia Tétreault*, who associated lay people to her work from the very beginning of the Institute in 1902. A whole range of services are asked of the volunteers of Pont-Viau: accompanying patients to doctors' appointments, on outdoor strolls or to recreational activities; friendly visits, reading to visually impaired sisters, etc. One of the volunteers relates her impressions upon returning from an outing with a Sister from the Pavilion: *I am giving back what I received. I have been trained for the care of the sick, I have few family obligations. I have enough time at my disposal, and I give it unsparingly to make someone happy. There is, too, the richness of human relationships. The bonds I develop with the M.I.C. Sisters have an international aspect; most of the Sisters have worked in other countries to proclaim the Good News! I am discovering lives totally given to the Mission.*

Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

In Solidarity with Immigrants

By Michelle Paquette, M.I.C.

Over the last century, the world of immigrants has changed drastically. We are light years away from the context of the 50s... and even farther away from that of 20s. In its own way, the history of the M.I.C. Centre of Quebec City reflects this amazing evolution. Michelle Paquette, m.i.c., recounts:

Before 1900, while serving as a volunteer in a house of welcome in Montreal, Délia Têtreault felt concerned about the fate of Italian immigrants. She sought ways to help them: home visits, catechetical teaching, etc. After the foundation of her missionary Institute, she opened health care centres and schools for the Chinese people of Montreal, of Quebec and Vancouver. As early as 1919, the house she set up in Quebec City aimed, among other things, at helping the Chinese immigrants. In those days, the secluded life which Chinese people had to live and their lack of knowledge of both English and French made their situation difficult. Some Sisters who spoke Cantonese thus devoted their time to visiting Chinese families as well as the sick of the different neighbourhoods of the city and became engaged in the religious education of those who wished to become Christians. This project initiated by our Foundress was called to grow.

During the 20s, French and English courses were organized. In 1962, our language school was affiliated to the *Catholic School Commission of Quebec* and in 1968, it passed on to the sector of *Ongoing Adult Education*. At this period, Gertrude Laforest, M.I.C., who has been a missionary in China for several years, took charge of courses for the Chinese. In 1970, she suggested opening the classes to other nationalities. The students had access to day and evening classes. Their numbers increased, and in 1976, religious Congregations and lay teachers were recruited to reinforce the team of M.I.C. Sisters. All of them were volunteers. In 80 years of existence, 68 M.I.C., 39 men and

women religious from 10 Congregations and 35 lay people

have provided quality teaching to thousands of students from the five continents and have helped them make a new start in their lives. Since 1976, the Centre has received students from nearly 50 countries. There have been times when there was a prevalence of immigrants from Southeast Asia, from South America or from European countries, but these were always surrounded by students from other countries: Africa, Yukon, the coast of Labrador, Nepal and Tibet.

Over the years, the M.I.C. Centre became not only a language school, but a place of openness to internationality and cooperation in a mutually helpful society. Social assistance went hand in hand with the teaching of languages. Until 1999, Sister Gertrude responded to requests on behalf of Chinese people, especially as an interpreter in hospitals, at the *Ministry of Immigration and at the Manpower Office*. Other M.I.C. Sisters acted in the same capacity for the new arrivals of other nationalities. The unconditional welcome, the availability and gratuitousness have generated bonds of gratitude among all those who have come. We have been enriched by their talent, courage and generosity. We admire their determination to rebuild their broken lives after indescribable sufferings. Today, the M.I.C. Centre of Quebec City had to discontinue its operations. Our solidarity with the immigrants will now be expressed in other places and in other forms, that they may be enabled to journey with confidence towards a new life. ●



Lay teachers and religious at the M.I.C. Centre. Among them are a few M.I.C.s. 1st row: Carmelle Caron (2nd l.), followed by Michelle Paquette and Thérèse Blais; 2nd row: Jeannine Proulx (5th l.), Hélène Fontaine (3rd r.), Estelle Messier (2nd r.), Pauline Williams, Provincial Superior, was present (2nd row, 4th l.).



In the Garden of God

Sister Marguerite Lamoureux (Sister Georges-Aimé)

Marguerite was born in Montreal on the 1st of May 1916. While a student with the Sisters of Holy Cross, she discovered the beauty of religious life as she saw young women engage in this vocation. At 18, she met the Sisters of Mary Reparatrix and helped out with their projects among the youth: library, day care, sewing room... The life style appealed to her and she decided to enter this community. A fortuitous incident made her change her plans. While sitting at her grandfather's bedside during his illness, she read the magazine *Le Précurseur* and discovered sisters who dedicate their lives to the foreign missions. On the 1st of February 1943, she was admitted to the Postulate of our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.



Sister Marguerite left for Haiti in 1949. She spent 42 years in the service of the Haitian people whom she deeply loved. She devoted her energies to the human and religious formation of young people. She facilitated various apostolic movements, especially the Girl Guides. Her missionary zeal resulted in the emergence of school directresses, excellent teachers and several religious vocations. Returning to Canada for good in 1991, she retired in Pont-Viau and made herself useful through many services. When her strength declined, she entered our infirmary, where she died on September 4, 2000.

Sister Lorette Laurent (Sister Gabriel-de-l'Incarnation)

Born in Quebec City on September 16, 1916, Lorette joined her sister Rita among the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception on August 8, 1937. Her younger sister Gabrielle followed her four years later. After her studies in nursing at the *Hôtel-Dieu* Hospital of Montreal, she cared for our sick Sisters until 1949, at which time she left for Mount St. Joseph Hospital in Vancouver. The following year, she fell a victim to polio. She owed the sudden recovery of the use of her legs to Our Lady of the Cape during the visit of her pilgrim statue. Sister Lorette resumed her duties as a nurse and excelled in every area: lab, archives, pharmacy... Called back to Montreal, she devoted herself to the Chinese Hospital and to the infirmary of Pont-Viau. Gifted with many skills, she spent recreation time creating knitted garments and needle paintings which were real masterpieces.



In 1991, Sister Lorette received some sad news: her eyesight was seriously threatened. Far from complaining about this severe trial, she reacted by seeking ways to remain autonomous. She applied for the services of the Nazareth Institute and started learning braille. Having retired to Pont-Viau, she appreciated community life and exerted a remarkable influence by the quality of her welcome and of her listening. She handed her life over to God with serenity surrounded by her two sisters on October 14, 2000.

Sister Marie-Annette Bonin (Sister Jean-de-l'Immaculée)

Marie-Annette was born in Saint-Hyacinthe on August 13, 1911. After a solid academic formation with the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, she looked to embracing the missionary life. She entered the Novitiate of our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, on February 1st, 1938. As a young sister, she engaged in education. She taught at our school of the Mother House until her dream to live out the mission in foreign lands was realized: she was one of the four pioneers who left for Madagascar on September 19, 1952. In Morondava, she became headmistress of the European school, while remaining in charge of courses. She also worked ardently at the academic and spiritual formation of Malagasy young people in our different elementary schools on the island.



After her return to Canada in 1969, she worked at the General Secretariat, and then, for more than 25 years, with untiring energy, she gave private lessons to many students who appreciated the quality of her teaching. She loved them dearly and her classroom was decorated with their photographs. She accompanied them with her prayers, as she did so many other people. In the final years of her life, she was remarkable for her confidence in Mary, her abandonment to the will of God and her spirit of thanksgiving. Sister Marie-Annette died peacefully on October 18, 2000, at the end of a very intense life.

Sister Thérèse Germain (Sister Marie-de-l'Incarnation)

Thérèse was born in Quebec City on October 17, 1902. As a young woman, she prayed fervently that she might discern her call to the missionary life. After completing her studies at the Ursuline Convent, she entered our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, on August 2, 1923. As a young religious, she helped with the edition of our magazine, *Le Précurseur*, and of the *Messenger de la Sainte-Enfance* (Messenger of the Holy Childhood). In 1938, she took charge of our printing shop at the Mother House. She oversaw the printing of *The Precursor*, the English edition of our magazine, of the *Messenger de la Sainte-Enfance* and of the missionary promotional literature to be used in the schools. Those were the days of lead type setting and noisy machines. Sister Thérèse handled these quite effectively. She remained in this specialized area of work until 1953.



Her departure for Mount St. Joseph Hospital in Vancouver, a hospital for Asian patients, was the beginning of a second career for her. She took a course in radiology to become a technician and was, here again, appreciated by all for her availability and for the perfection of her work. In 1980, she returned to Quebec. A few years later, she was forced by illness to retire to our house of Pont-Viau, where she died on December 16, 2000, after a very productive life.

Sister Cécile Demers (Sister Cécile-de-Milan)

Cécile was born in Mount-Laurier on November 5, 1913. Her missionary vocation matured through a succession of events which she deemed providential. She was 26 years old when she was admitted to our Institute, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.



At the end of her formation years in religious life, Sister Cécile devoted herself to the promotion of our magazine, *Le Précurseur*, until her departure for Malawi in 1951. Involved in the holistic education of young African women, she very capably taught sewing, knitting and cooking. A clever business woman, she organized a small business in which the sale of the pupils' handicrafts brought in a supplement to the family budget. In 1970, in the midst of her intense activity, she was forced by illness to return to Canada. After an unexpected cure with which she credited Délia Tétreault, our Foundress, she took a course in hairdressing and foot care. She offered services to the Sisters of our Community and to many people whom she received in her little office of St. Hubert Street in Montreal. She listened a great deal, encouraged people and healed them. Sister Cécile spent her final years at the Délia Tétreault Pavilion in Pont-Viau. She was serene, courageous and filled with thanksgiving. She died at the *Cité de la Santé* Hospital in Laval on December 17, 2000.

Sister Marie-des-Neiges Veilleux (Sister Sainte-Clémentine)

Marie-des-Neiges was born on August 5, 1912, in Saint-Clément, Lower St. Lawrence region. From childhood, she acquired from her mother, a liking for prayer and developed an interest in the lives of saints. As a young woman, she questioned her future very seriously. She decided to become a missionary. It was on August 8, 1933, that she joined our Community, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. In 1936, on ending her novitiate, she assumed the charge of culinary services at our convent of Joliette. For 30 years, she performed this service in our houses of education and closed retreats. Filled with a spirit of ardour and initiative, she devoted her energy and skill to the accomplishment of her tasks. Those were years of hard work and of total dedication.



In 1966, she left for Haiti, a long-awaited mission. She spent seven years there, assisting the M.I.C. team wherever her services were required. Her kindness and her joy were comforting to all. After returning to Quebec for health reasons, she worked at handicrafts and remained very active. She kept close contact with her family. Last July, the accidental death of her niece, Germaine Veilleux, m.i.c., was a terrible shock to her. Sister Marie-des-Neiges died a few months later, on January 10, 2001, at the Délia Tétreault Pavilion. She left us the memory of her charity and devotion.

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Are prayers
And trust.

For you are our Lady,
Mother of Christ,
Queen of the world,
Path of hope
And I call you
Mary.

André Delapierre

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