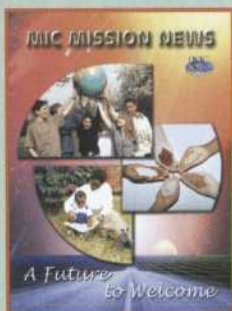


MIC MISSION NEWS

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2002



*A Future
to Welcome*



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MIC MISSION NEWS

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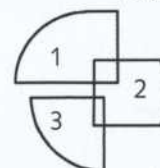
Africa



South America



Taiwan



MISSIONARY INTENTIONS 2002

October

That missionaries, whether priests, religious or laity,
may have the courage to announce
Jesus Christ's special love for the poor.

November

That the active participation of Christians
may encourage the spreading of the Gospel
through the mass media.

December

That the celebration of the birth of Christ the Saviour
may help people of every culture to have a greater respect
for the little ones and the disinherited.

A Century of Service... a Hopeful Tomorrow

With great joy and thanksgiving, our Institute spearheaded in January 2002 a year long series of celebrations on the happy occasion of its centennial anniversary. Looking back through 100 years, we realize how things have changed since Délia Tétreault founded our Community. Not only are there fresh opportunities and challenges, but there are novel insights and directions to the missionary work of the Church. Our Community has ended its service in some of our earlier missions, leaving behind vibrant Christian communities prepared to assume their own place in the missionary work of the Church. We catch glimpses of this reality taking place in the countries featured in this issue: Malawi and Zambia in Central Africa, Bolivia, Peru and Chile in South America and Taiwan in Asia.

Throughout this centennial year, we have felt a strong attachment to our roots and to you, our dear Readers. We have recounted our stories again and again. Still, so much need to be shared. We thank you most sincerely for travelling with us to all our missions. We wish to express above all, our gratefulness, especially for continued support from family and friends, for the lives of those who have gone before us, for the lives of those who have shared our journey, for the people of different countries whom we have been blessed to accompany. We will ever be inspired by our dedicated missionaries and deeply grateful for the generosity of our subscribers and benefactors. We are celebrating not only 100 years of history of our Community - its good works, its faithfulness, its many beginnings and endings, but we also celebrate close collaboration with all those who have supported us in our mission.

Faithful to its founding vision, our Institute faces the future of mission work with renewed spirit. May we be inspired and challenged by the words John Paul II addresses to religious communities: *You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things.* (Vita Consecrata, n. 110). May we walk with conviction and courage toward that future we are being called to pursue energetically. As we begin the second century of our Institute's life, we embrace our future with hope... may it be truly blessed!

Over the years, what a great privilege and blessing it has been for me to be a partner in mission with you through the *MIC Mission News*! It is now time to bid you farewell... the near future holds for me a call to a new service within our M.I.C. Community. I wish to take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt thanks and prayerful remembrance.

Ma. Anthea Raso, m.i.c.



A Promising



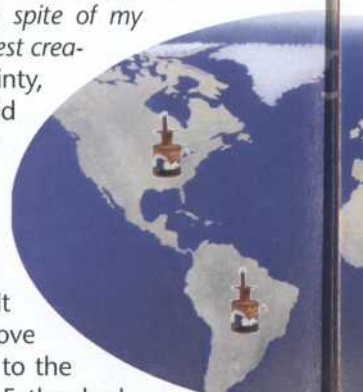
By Rita Bélainsky, M.I.C.

Délia Tétreault continues to astonish us by the vastness of her missionary project and by the extraordinary richness of the spirituality of Thanksgiving she handed down as a legacy. Today, her influence overflows abundantly the whole framework of the religious missionary Institute of women she founded. Having become international, her Congregation associates to her apostolic undertakings lay missionaries and numerous ASMIC (*Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*) of diverse nations and cultures. New ways of proposing Délia's spiritual experience are unfolding. Rita Bélainsky, M.I.C., is engaged with other companions in a ministry of guidance and accompaniment to persons desirous of interiority and personal growth. She relates how the values transmitted by Délia inspire their approach.

Délia Tétreault was a happy woman. She had found the way to lasting happiness and in her letters she multiplied her exhortations to joy, a joy that she lived out and that pervaded her whole person. *From what source did Mother Délia draw this happiness that pervaded her life? Where did her assurance and joy come from?*

One day, in Quebec, in the midst of extreme difficulties that shook her young Institute, she disclosed a revealing confidence to her Sisters: *When I stop and think that God loves me divinely in spite of my weaknesses, I feel that I am the happiest creature in the world!* Here, with certainty, she expresses in a few words the vivid experience from which she drew her joy and the happiness that pervaded her life. The thought and the assurance of God's love for her is what gave Délia the sense of being the happiest person in the world. It was also out of this movement of love that she consecrated her whole life to the realization of the mission which the Father had entrusted to her.

For the past one hundred years, nearly 1500 of her daughters of different cultures and nationalities, faithful to the calls of our times and drawing from that same source, have dedicated their lives to the Church's missionary apostolate. Today, having come to an even greater awareness of the beauty and grandeur of the charism we received, we acknowledge the mission that befalls us. In faithfulness to the inspiration and example of Délia, we have the same call, that of sharing with those who so desire the gift of the love of God in their lives.



The light shining for life and work of Délia radiates today throughout the world.

Logo of the exposition *With Hope-filled Luggage* prepared by the Museum of Civilization (Québec) on the occasion of the Centenary of our Institute.



Montreal. M.I.C. community engaged in the project of formation and accompaniment of persons. (l. to r.) Monique Préfontaine, M.I.C., Rita Bélainsky, M.I.C., Pierrette Bélainsky, M.I.C., Louise Desjardins, M.I.C.



Future

Movement of Newness of the Spirit

The transmission of our heritage is part and parcel of a whole gamut of activities the aim of which is the formation and overall development of people. Those who so desire are provided guidance and accompaniment in the discovery of their own identity and in the harmonious growth of their being on both the psychological and spiritual levels. We are in awe as we witness in such persons the liberation from their fears and the emergence of riches of being heretofore unsuspected. Touched by the love of God in their lives, they discover their deep identity, that of children of God destined for perfect joy and for the fullness of life. Such is the experience to which each one is invited in this movement of newness of the Spirit.

In a Spirit of Thanksgiving

Others feel called to experience their personal growth within a group, according to our spirituality of thanksgiving. An animation tool was developed in the form of a pedagogical guide to accompany this process: *A Long Magnificat: for a Marian and Missionary Spirituality of Thanksgiving*. It is intended primarily for us, the daughters of Délia Tétreault, for the Associates of our religious family, the ASMIC, for the lay missionaries and for the young women in formation in our Institute. It also speaks to all those who have the desire to give thanks for God's love in their lives, a love in which they find the same joy and the same pervading happiness as experienced by Délia herself.

Like a Lighted Lamp

This spiritual legacy handed down to us by Délia Tétreault is a gift to the Church and to the world. It is



Bolivia. Carmen Ménard, M.I.C. (standing, 4th l.), offers adults a formation centered on the person and the group.



Japan. Suzanne Morneau, M.I.C. (standing, 3rd l.), animates sessions on personal growth. She also directs stages of formation in this domain for Asian and Oceanic teams.

a way that responds to the basic aspirations of human beings, allowing them to discover the infinite love of God the Father for each of them. It also offers our world a way of experiencing the joys, sorrows and upheavals of life in a spirit of thanksgiving. Our hearts are filled with joy and hope as we share it.

May this spirituality be a glowing lamp to enlighten the quest of those, in every corner of the earth, who are in search of joy and happiness in their lives. We are entering our 2nd centennial of foundation with the certainty of God's love, confident that a *promising future lies ahead*.



Quebec. At the University of Laval during a session on the Mission. Huguette Crête, M.I.C., works with an intercommunity team in the formation of lay missionaries.



Montreal. Jeannine Belair, M.I.C. (at centre), with young people who are preparing for a missionary sojourn in Bolivia

shining forth from the work of Délia Tétreault today throughout the world.

AFRICA

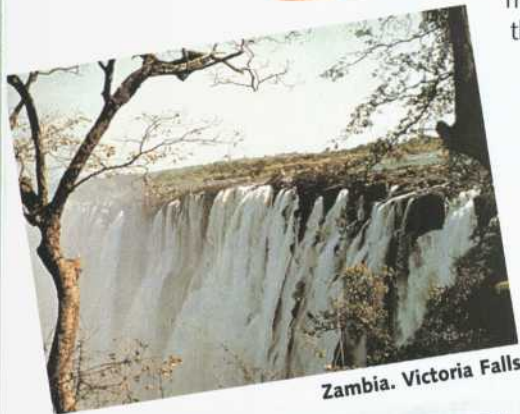
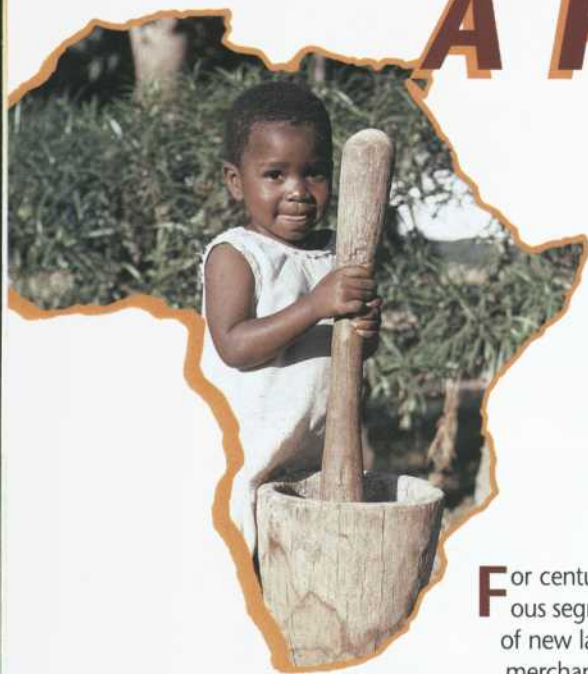
MALAWI — ZAMBIA

By Louise Denis, M.I.C.

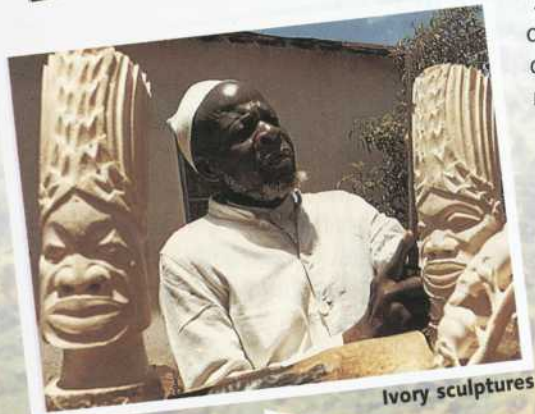
For centuries, Africa and its peoples were regarded by the rest of the world as a mysterious segment of the planet, exerting irresistible attraction on the part of explorers in quest of new lands, and of traders eager to find exotic products. It had become customary for merchant ships to dock on African shores and for their crews to venture in caravans through mountains and arid plains to trade gold, ivory and valuable manpower.

In the middle of the 19th century, on the heels of missionary and explorer David Livingstone, several Churches send missionaries to the interior of the continent. Around that time, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia become protectorates of the Crown of England before constituting, along with Southern Rhodesia, the *Federation of Central Africa*. During the rise of African nationalist movements, Nyasaland obtained in 1964, its independence under the name of Malawi, and Northern Rhodesia, now named Zambia, also proclaimed its independence.

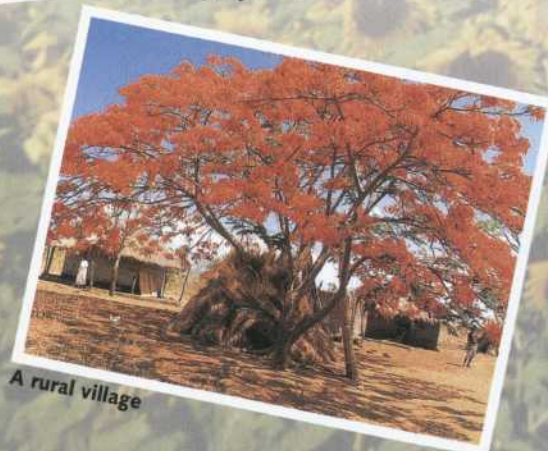
This continent has a population of almost 800 million of very diverse cultures and traditions, and its independent States form the African Union. Malawi and Zambia include several ethnic groups of the Bantu stock, which is found in most of the territory south of the Equator. Eighty percent of the population of these two countries lives on the produce of their lands and on cattle raising. They are by nature cheerful and ingenuous people who love life and are very fond of colours and music. Dance is a favourite way for them to express their vitality and rich sensitivity. Aware of the richness of their culture, they transmit it faithfully from generation to generation. Africa has had great civilizations and the history of its peoples and cultures abounds with glorious chapters. There are still today, on this continent, a few countries in search of democratic governments and regions where the struggle against poverty, ignorance and disease must be carried on.



Zambia. Victoria Falls



Ivory sculptures



A rural village



Musical instruments; national dress



Katete, our first mission in Malawi



Malawi. At our Postulate of Mzimba. Cecilia Mzumara, M.I.C., in charge (1st r.), the postulants with Yolanda Oducado, M.I.C., Assistant Provincial (1st I.) and Victoria Chirwa, M.I.C., Provincial Superior (3rd I.)

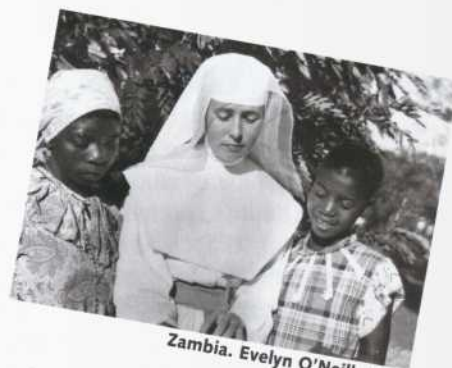
The Work of Remarkable Women

At the request of Bishop Marcel St-Denis, M. Afr., Apostolic Prefect of Northern Nyassa, a first group of four of our Sisters left for Nyasaland in 1948. Their dream of being missionaries in Africa was thus realized, the very same dream Délia Tétreault had had in 1896 but had to give it up because of illness. Upon arrival, our missionaries settled in the parish of St. Teresa of Katete. They were the first Canadian women missionaries to join in the missionary activity of the Church in this region of the country. Other companions successively came to join the group and eight other parishes welcomed them in as many years. In those days, there were no roads, no schools, and no medical services. Everything had to be started from scratch and there were many challenges. In 1954, it was Bishop Firmin Courtemanche, M. Afr., of the diocese of Chipata, Zambia, whose request was, in turn, responded to. He welcomed our Sisters in the parish of St. Anne of Fort Jameson.

With zeal and determination, our missionaries learned the local languages of



Zambia. Hélène Labelle, M.I.C.



Zambia. Evelyn O'Neill, M.I.C.



Zambia. Community of Chipata

the regions where they worked and immersed themselves in the daily life of the people. They lived close to the people to familiarize themselves with their culture and customs. The mission of evangelization was coupled with the establishment of projects that responded to local needs. Schools were opened, dispensaries welcomed the sick, domestic science centres assisted young women in their role as wives and mothers, catechism classes were offered and the parish ministry was organized.

After more than 50 years in Africa, inspired by the example of those who preceded them and by the missionary charism inherited from our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, our Sisters of Malawi and Zambia keep renewing their commitment... *to witness to the love of Christ and to cooperate with their local Churches in the mission of proclaiming the Good News and making the Kingdom visible.*

Malawi. Community of Mzimba





Malawi. The first five Sisters of the Holy Rosary with Sr. Bernadette Dumas, M.I.C. (1st row, 2nd l.), Sr. Madeleine Loranger, M.I.C. (1st row, 4th l.), and Bishop Marcel St-Denis, M.Afr. (at centre)



The Risen Christ in Malawian art.
Photo: Vivant Univers



Mzuzu, Malawi. Léontine Lang, M.I.C., is engaged in different projects favouring the creativity of local artists.

The Church of Africa

Birth of a Local Church

In 1950, the Churches of Africa were largely dependent on those of Europe and America in terms of clergy and religious personnel. Out of a desire to promote the establishment and growth of local Churches, in 1952 we helped with the foundation of the Institute of the *Sisters of the Holy Rosary* in the diocese of Mzuzu, Malawi. Later, in the 60s, we gave our fraternal support to the young community of *Good Shepherd Sisters* founded in the diocese of Chipata, Zambia. A few of our Sisters were also part of the teaching staff of the minor seminary of the diocese of Mzuzu, in view of the promotion of the local clergy.



Ebony sculpture: The family is the body in which the ancestor lives on.
Photo: Vivant Univers

The African Soul

The people of Africa are gifted with natural and cultural values propitious to the acceptance of the Gospel. They believe in a God who is the creator and master of life and death. They have a dynamic view of the universe in which the spiritual and material worlds constantly interact. The social aspect of their lives rests on the principles of justice

and respect of authority. The reality of evil, in its individual or social forms, is alive in the consciousness of the people, hence the existence of rites of purification within their clans to restore communion among the living and with the ancestors. Their relation to nature is one of respect, veneration and fear, for it is from nature that they get everything they need.

The revelation of a loving, personal and merciful God made flesh in Jesus Christ, responds to the deep aspirations of the Bantu soul. It casts away fear and reinforces every aspect of LIFE. However, adherence to the new faith is a demanding proposition, requiring adjustments in the practice of certain customs and cultural rites. The *Good News* is a seed of life. When it is received, it takes root in the culture of the people and integrates genuine human values, purifying them and restoring them to the fullness of their meaning. The Spirit of God *makes all things new* in the hearts of those who welcome Him with an upright and sincere soul.

Malawi. Thérèse Déziel, M.I.C. (1st row, l.) and seminarians of Kachebere



Chipata, Zambia. Rita Guay, M.I.C. (standing, 1st r.), with a group of *Good Shepherd Sisters*





Célébration mariale sur le campus de l'école

The Church's Mission to Evangelize

The Church of Africa joyfully celebrated its faith in the risen Christ during the *Special Assembly on Africa of the Synod of Bishops* held in Rome in 1994. In faithfulness to the tradition of the early centuries of Christianity in Africa, which dates back to the apostolic times, this Synod was a manifestation of hope at the very time when several events seemed to usher Africa towards discouragement - events such as the genocide in Rwanda, the pandemic spread of AIDS, political instability and war raging in several African countries. This gathering was a historic moment of grace and its purpose was clear: At the dawn of the third millennium, to help the Church in Africa gain a deeper insight into its mission to evangelize, taking into account its evolution as well as all the cultural, social, political and economic context of its reality.

For a Church that is Alive and Mature

Zambia received its first Catholic missionaries in 1891. Today, in Kanyanga, a rural Christian community of the diocese of Chipata, the number of adherents to traditional religions still exceeds the number of Catholics. The pastoral activities of this community led by Edith Faucher, m.i.c., focus on the mission to proclaim the Gospel and on the invitation to share the faith received.

Sister Edith is assisted in her ministry by lay catechists. They are the leaders of the



Zambia. Edith Faucher, m.i.c., and a young parishioner of Kanyanga



Emelda Katongo, m.i.c., during a catechism class in Kanyanga



The catechist - a pillar of the Christian Community

basic Christian communities scattered in various parts of the territory. The life and structure of these groups of believers reflect the traditional model of the African clan, whose main supporting values are the common good and a family spirit. In addition, their practices of reconciliation, service and sharing witness to the action of God who dwells in them. Tasks are shared in such a way that every member takes on responsibilities for the well-being of all according to the charisms received from the Spirit. The faith journey and life of the group revolve around the Word of God. It helps everyone to discover the essentials of the Christian faith: the love of the Father manifested in his son Jesus Christ. Family ministry is also a major priority, for it is in the crucible of the family that cultural and Christian traditions are developed with respect and in harmony.



Zambia. Edith Faucher, m.i.c., with the choir of Kanyanga

The Church of Zambia counts approximately 45% of Christians; the rest are either Muslims or adherents of traditional religions.



A Ministry of Compassion

Long-Standing Tradition in the Church

The Church in mission considers medical services as an integral part of the mission and a special channel for the proclamation of the Good News of Christ's love for those who suffer. Thus, from the very beginning, we have helped to set up networks of health care, both preventive and curative, as well as to provide ongoing training for local health care workers. Our *Health Centre of Kanyanga* welcomes patients from the villages of the area. Special attention is given to mothers and their babies through prenatal clinics and vaccination programmes for children from 0 to 5 years old. Mobile clinics enable us to reach those in remote areas and the less favoured.

New Challenges

One of the major programmes promoted by the World Health Organization in the early 80's presented a slogan that described its objective: *Health for All by the Year 2000*. But the reality today is very different. The AIDS epidemic came and destroyed the hopes of such a dream. A real calamity, this disease rages most severely in the African

Malawi. Volunteers help AIDS orphans in villages. Huguette Ostiguy, M.I.C., engaged in pastoral counselling



Zambia. At the Health Centre of Kanyanga. Jacqueline Vachet, M.I.C., directress of personnel (standing, 1st l.), Suzanne Leclair, M.I.C., administrator (standing 2nd l.), Petronila Chira, M.I.C. (2nd r.), specialized in obstetrics



Zambia. Jeanne d'Arc Corriveau, M.I.C. (at centre), pastoral agent at Chipata Hospital



Mzimba, Malawi. Colette Leclerc, M.I.C., with an AIDS orphan who benefits of financial help for his studies

countries south of the Sahara desert, where 70% of the world's AIDS victims are found. The figures demonstrate the magnitude of the problem. The people affected by AIDS have exceeded in number those afflicted with malaria and all other deadly diseases among those between 15 and 49 years of age.

In addition to the enormous costs involved in the health services, the indirect costs and the short and long-term consequences on the economy, education and social life of the countries caught in this struggle are incalculable and unpredictable. The lack of manpower and the decrease of productivity affect all sectors of government and private enterprise. The widespread loss of human lives and the staggering number of orphans have become a problem. The magnitude of such a predicament is one beyond the capability of the extended family's traditional structure of assistance and support. Assisted by charitable and government organizations, volunteer groups are being set up in many parts of the region. They gather children into groups, offering them shelter, food, security and comfort.



Relevant Commitments

In spite of the context of poverty in which they exist, the Churches of Africa have developed a number of initiatives in the fight against AIDS. Their message is twofold. It is first a call to compassion towards the victims and their families by providing them guidance and assistance. It is also a call for social justice addressed to political authorities, both national and international, inviting them to provide accessibility and fair distribution of available drugs to those affected by the virus.

In the diocese of Mzuzu, in response to the needs created by the AIDS crisis, Louise Lefebvre, M.I.C., an experienced nurse, has developed a pastoral programme called *Home Based Care*. This pastoral approach deals with the different aspects involved in AIDS: the training of caregivers, prevention, care, home visitation, spiritual support and counselling. Those involved in this programme work in teams in a few parishes of the diocese. Their challenge is not to let themselves be discouraged by the magnitude of the situation and to carry on their loving and compassionate presence among their brothers and sisters in need.

These teams visit the sick in their villages and develop various initiatives of palliative care to alleviate their suffering. An environment of respect is created around the patient all along the evolution of the illness and the final stage is carefully prepared so that it is marked with dignity and peace. In the African culture, the immediate and the extended family provide a constant presence near those who are sick. The pastoral teams accompany those afflicted families and help them to grow



Malawi. Louise Lefebvre, M.I.C. (r.), and a health agent visit the sick in a village of Nkhata Bay.

spiritually by coming to a deeper understanding of the Christian concept of death, which finds hope in the resurrection of Christ.



Programmes for the Youth

Among the population, young people form the group most at risk of contracting AIDS, and in the current context, they receive special attention. Among the many programmes that have been set up, Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C., diocesan director of the Young Christian Students (YCS), initiated in the schools of the diocese of Mzuzu the project called *Behaviour Change Programme* (BCP). Its purpose is to bring the young people to reflect on the value of the gift of life and on the duty to protect it. They are encouraged to change their attitudes regarding the practice of their sexuality and to adopt a responsible behaviour by practicing abstinence, faithfulness and prevention according to circumstances.



Myriam Mphande, M.I.C., with animators involved in AIDS prevention education

Malawi. Rosalie Raivomanana, M.I.C. (1st l.), engaged in pastoral ministry with the youth of Nkhata Bay, also works in the BCP.



Malawi. Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C. (standing, 4th r.), in charge in the diocese for the Young Christian Students (YCS), meets with a group from Mzuzu.





Promotion of African Women

Diversity and Complementarity

The condition of African women has also improved over the last few years. International organizations have campaigned persistently for the protection of their rights. Women have also benefited from the care and concern of the Church and of the missionary institutions by acquiring a human, spiritual and professional formation. This enables them today to play a greater role in the different sectors of society. The promotion of women has always occupied a special place in our pastoral activities, and our commitments have changed according to times and needs.

For nearly three years now, our Sisters of Mzimba, Malawi have engaged in development projects in rural areas, using the method created by the renowned Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire. These projects are thought out, chosen and implemented by the people, who thus become the builders of their own future. The various stages of the process enable women to get involved in the realization of the goals they have set, acting in a complementary role with men. This cooperation is all the more essential since women are the ones who do 80% of the work needed to produce food for the family. Seven villages have initiated projects such as making bricks for the building of



Children of Mzimba transporting bricks for the building of a primary school

an elementary school, setting up a fruit tree nursery and sanitizing the environment. One important point to note is that all the villages involved have chosen to have literacy classes. The experience is exhilarating and filled with hope.

For several decades, *St. Anne's Homecraft and Leadership Training Centre* in Zambia, renowned for the quality of its teaching, has been offering human and professional formation to young women. The programme contains courses on domestic science and sessions on leadership. The values upon which our programme is based provide a Christian dimension to our teaching. We hope that these young women, inspired by the mission of the Centre, become dynamic leaders in their community and will succeed in promoting justice, peace and the dignity of persons.

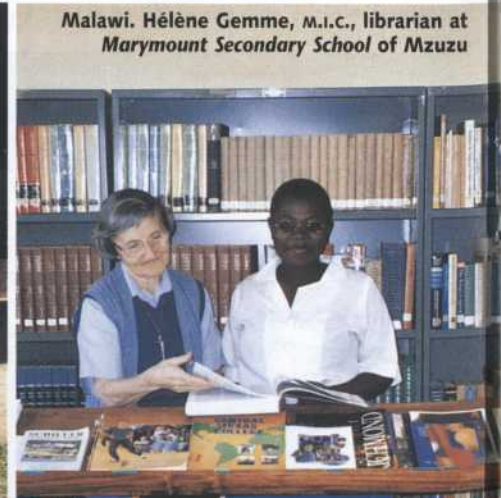


Jeannette Fanfan, M.I.C. (standing, 1st l.) and graduates of the literacy programme, *To educate a woman is to build a nation*

Zambia. Leonila Stewart, M.I.C., directress (standing, at centre), with students and personnel of *St. Anne's Homecraft and Leadership Centre* of Chipata



Malawi. Hélène Gemme, M.I.C., librarian at *Marymount Secondary School* of Mzuzu





Chipata, Zambia.
Germaine Pérusse, M.I.C. (at centre) and
Laurette Gauvin, M.I.C., (r.), with novices

Transmission of Life

By tradition, the role of the African woman is the transmission of life, and her deep vocation is to be a mother. However, a new vocation has appeared with the advent of Christianity, that of the consecrated religious life. Attracted to this way by the love poured into their hearts by the Spirit, more and more women consecrate their whole being to Christ and to the mission of the Church, putting themselves at the service of their brothers and sisters. These women command respect and recognition because of the richness of their being and because of their openness, dynamism and commitment. In a Church viewed as *God's Family*, they bear the witness of a fraternal life in a spirit of communion and cooperation with the clergy and the laity. A few young African women wishing

Our missionaries of Malawi and Zambia well represent the internationality of our Institute.



poverty, ignorance and disease. They took part in the shaping of societies based on the principles of right and fairness, as well as in the formation of political and religious elite.

Awakening of a New Hope

It is barely more than 100 years since the Church was implanted in Malawi and Zambia. Today, it is showing what we call the *signs of the times*. This Church known as a mission Church has become missionary itself. Out of joy and gratitude for the faith received, the moment has come for it to head for the open sea and continue the mission of the messengers of the Good News as in the early times of Christianity. The Church in Africa is awakening to a new hope and its cultural values are a constant source of inspiration. The current flowering of priestly and religious vocations raises the hope of being able to bring the Gospel to all parts of the continent, and even to respond to the call of the universal Church echoing the words of Christ: *You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth* (Acts 1: 8). *



Logo of the Centenary
of the Church of Malawi
(1901-2001)

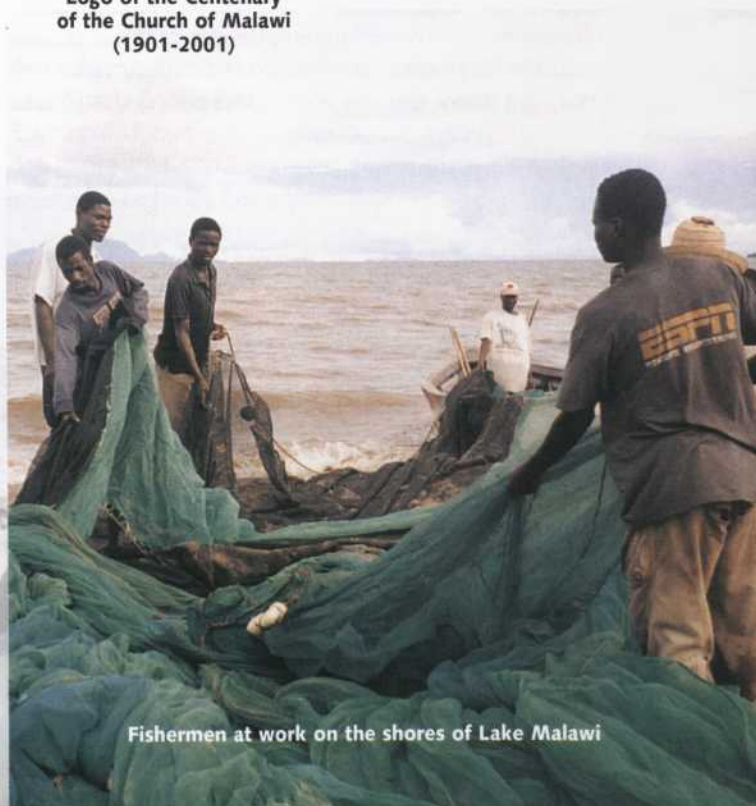


Moment of prayer at our Novitiate of Chipata

to live their religious life as a missionary in thanksgiving in the manner of Mary have joined our Community.

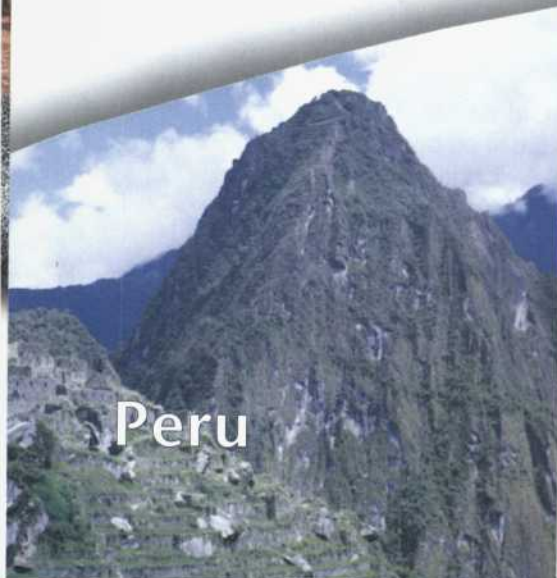
A Historic and Determinant Period

The historical context in which the Catholic and Protestant missionaries exercised their mission in Africa in the 20th century signalled a determining period for the autonomy of peoples and the mission of the Church. They demonstrated an absolute devotion through their collaboration with governments in the efforts exerted for the development of rural areas and for the fight against



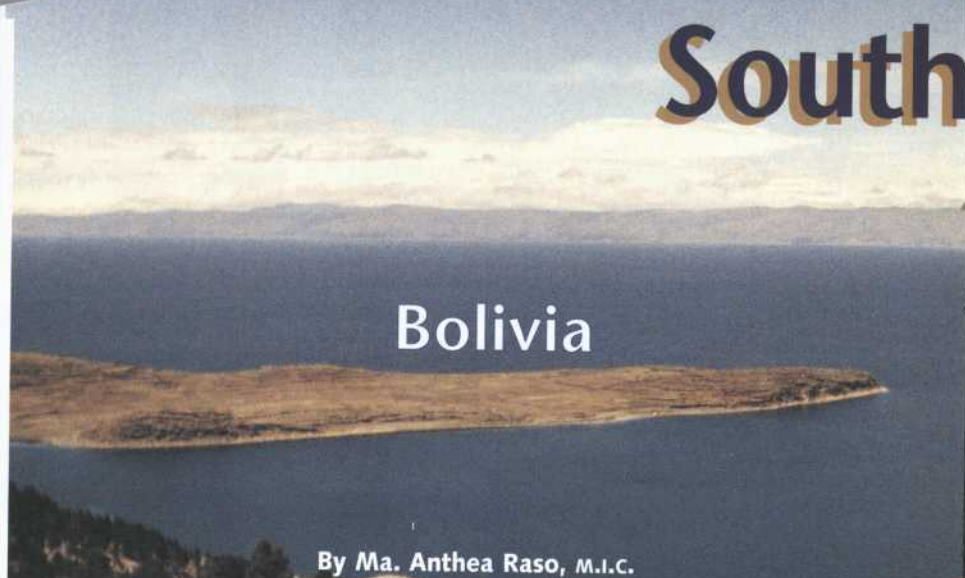
Fishermen at work on the shores of Lake Malawi

South



Peru

Machu Picchu



Bolivia

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

Lake Titicaca



A Continent of Diversity and of Contrasts

South America is a vibrant, developing continent of great environmental and cultural contrasts. One way to appreciate the diversity of this continent's culture and history is to highlight its geography and natural resources: vast grasslands, Amazonian tropical rainforests, the Andean highlands, snow-covered mountains and tremendous glaciers, barren deserts and fertile agricultural areas.

Although South America presents a distinctive and extraordinary cultural fusion, the countries are unique in themselves and present both the ultra-modern and the exotic. The continent cradles lost cities and civilizations while remaining deeply marked with the pageantry and colour of their grandiose rituals and celebrations. Its history is filled with tales of mystery and wealth, many originating from the three great civilizations in South America - the Inca, the Maya and the Aztec. The period that marked



A Holy Week procession in a Bolivian village.

Colonial South America was itself also a story of power and wealth versus the struggle for survival.

A Continent of Missionary Challenges

Catholic bishop representatives from all the countries of the Americas participated at the *Special Synod for America*, held in Rome in 1997. Focusing on the urgent need to renew the commitment of witnessing the Gospel, the Synod document now becomes an important signpost of evangelization for the local churches of South America in the new millennium. The new evangelization envisages a continued exchange of gifts with many ways of collaboration between local Churches in the common work of sharing the Gospel. Hence the strong insistence on mission animation to bring Christians to witness to the Good News beyond their geographical, ethnic, cultural or economic boundaries. Moreover, the *Latin American Report*¹ presented at the meeting of the Executive Board of the International Association of Catholic Missiologists (IACM) held in Rome in 2001, began with the word missionary.



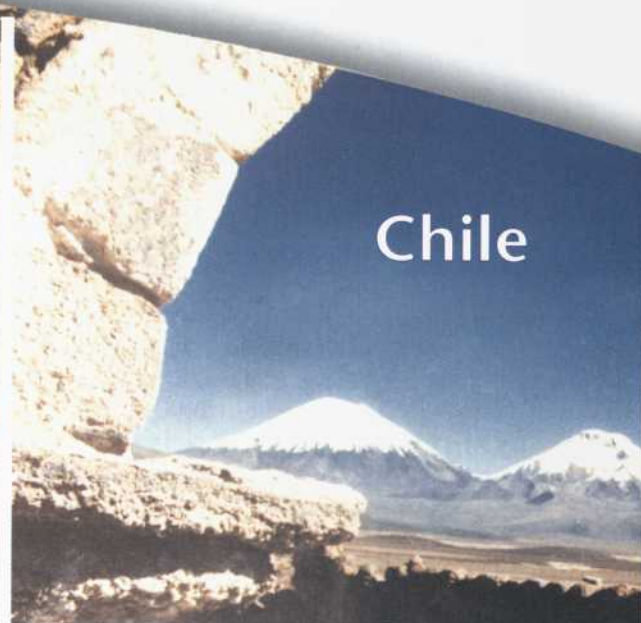
Paraná, Argentina. Nancy Campos, M.I.C., Chilean (at centre), at the COMLA VI - CAM 1 in 1999

1. An Overview of Missionary Challenges Today

Francis A. Oborji, Executive Secretary
Executive Board of the International Association of Catholic Missiologists



Photo : A. Allary



A view of the Andes

Missionary in all sectors and levels of the evangelizing Church is the expression that best describes the actual reality of the continent. This missionary awareness is due to diverse factors which include, among others, the Missionary Congresses at national and continental levels, the latter called COMLAS (*Missionary Congresses of Latin America*). The Sixth COMLA (1999), was also designated CAM 1, the first American Missionary Conference, to emphasize how the Church in America is one.

The IACM Report underlined that in Latin America which comprises Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, Central America and South America, *mission is from the poor to the poor*. And for the missiologists in the whole continent, the accent is always on enculturation, human promotion, ecumenism, the universality of the Christian message and ecological awareness. The report presented proposals for the future, foremost among which is to make use of the period for the preparation of COMLA 7, CAM 2, to be held in 2003 in Guatemala, to further elicit missionary awareness and animation.

An Evangelizing Church

Of all the concerns of God's people that have resounded in the hall of the *Special Synod for America*, the cry of

the poor has been heard with special attention. Not a single Episcopal Conference in America has failed to speak clearly and with deep emotion about the quest for justice for peoples whose lives and human dignity are challenged by poverty and want.

In South America, there are regions which suffer conditions of human misery. To these woes must be added those caused by abuses in the globalization of the world's culture and economy, those caused by the drug traffic, the diversion of scarce resources into the arms trade as well as political and business corruption which deprives people of the share of material goods intended for or earned by them and to which they have a right.

Because of its courage, the Church continues to be perceived as a credible, ethical institution. This credibility is not based on abstract assent by ordinary Christians to the Church's teaching. Very few of them have read Episcopal documents or liberation theology. But many are aware that committed members of the Church live in their midst in the poorest barrios and remotest Andean towns and know what the daily lives of campesinos and urban workers are all about.

Peru. Carmen Tito, M.I.C. (at centre), during a baptism



Catechism class in a Bolivian village.





M.I.C. Presence and Service

Today, our Community continues to share with dedication and generosity the life of the people and of the Church in Bolivia (since 1957), in Peru (since 1960) and in Chile (since 1963). In 1970, our Institute opened a house in Lima, Peru especially for the administration of the *Province of South America*, by grouping our Sisters of the three countries. Over the years, our Sisters' presence and service in these mission places have brought forth intercultural fraternities, new vocations, dynamic ASMIC (*Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*) and Christians actively involved in the life of their community.

Bolivia

Known as the *Tibet of the Americas*, landlocked Bolivia is the highest and most isolated country in the Americas. It has three distinct geographic zones: the mountains and *Altiplano*, the semitropical *Yungas* and temperate valleys of the mountain slopes, and the tropical lowlands. Fifty-five percent of its population of 8.5 million consists of the *Quechua* and the *Aymara* peoples who traditionally had not intermarried and had kept their languages, physical characteristics and many social traditions distinct. With a colonial heritage that is among the longest in the Americas, the Republic is still struggling today to provide its people with social, economic and political equality.

About 95 percent of Bolivians profess to be Catholics; nonetheless, a much smaller portion participates actively. Poverty is a favourable ground for different sects and native superstitions to flourish. The Church's weak presence in the rural areas has likewise encouraged the development of an Andean folk-Catholicism among the vast majority of indigenous people. An example is the near synonymous association of *Pacha Mama* (Mother Earth) and the Virgin Mary.

ASMICs of Señor de los Milagros Parish, Pucallpa, Peru, with their animators: Thérèse Beaudet, M.I.C. (2nd row, 5th l.), Thérèse Lavoie, M.I.C. (2nd row, 5th r.), Gabrielle Tremblay, M.I.C., in charge of the parish (seated, 4th r.)



Our Sisters of South America, with resource
The Provincial Council: Gisèle Guinois, M.I.C., Provincial Provincial and Secretary (1st row, 2nd l.), Suzanne L.



Delegates from Bolivia, Chile and Peru to the M.I.C. Provincial Chapter, 1999

Peru

The land of gold and of sun-worshipping Incas, Peru was the home of the largest empire in the world. With a population of more than 26 million today, it is a fascinating country with three regions that are naturally well divided: the Coasts, the Highlands and the Jungle, representing three entirely different worlds from the geographical, climatic and human point of view. In recent years, bold reform programs and significant progress in curtailing guerrilla activity and drug trafficking contribute to the country's economic growth.



resource persons during a Symposium on the Mission.
Provincial Superior (1st row, 3rd r.), Ederlina Torres, M.I.C., Assistant
Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C., Provincial Councillor (2nd row, 4th l.).



Bolivia: Students at the *Institute of Rural Education (IER)* after a cultural presentation. Elmire Allary, M.I.C., directress (standing, 4th l.),
Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C., (standing, 4th r.),
Jeanne-Odette Rasoarimanana, M.I.C. (1st row, 2nd r.)

As Peru moves from one crisis to the next, the emerging popular classes continue to look to the Church for leadership and moral support. *The Religious Conference of Peru (CRP)* has courageously taken on two major issues: integrated formation and the defence of human rights. The Catholic Church, to which over 90 per cent of the population belongs, is recognized in Peru's Constitutions as deserving of government cooperation. The ceremonial aspects of the Catholic religion, moral dictates and values are profoundly embedded in Peruvian culture and society, with every village, town and city having its official church or cathedral and patron saint.

Chile

Despite its geographical isolation by formidable barriers, Chile has traditionally been one of the continent's best educated and most stable and politically sophisticated nations. Today, it is one of the leading industrial countries in the continent. Eighty percent of its population of around 16 million live in urban areas. Chile is also home to a number of immigrant groups, including minority populations from Asia and from nearly every European country.



Peru:
Cipriana Ccahuana, M.I.C. (l.)
and Maria Goretti Garcia, novice,
in their native costumes.

Approximately 90% of Chileans are Catholics. The Catholic Church has played a central role in Chilean politics since colonial days, particularly with regards to the protection of human rights. Today, the Church is asked to go back to the ways of closeness, solidarity, insertion and to the prophetic role she played during the years of dictatorship. *The Conference of Religious of Chile (CONFERRE)* is attentive to this reality.

An integral part of Chile's history and culture, Catholicism has provided the country with some of its most compelling cultural monuments. Among these are the colonial adobe churches and cathedrals of its towns and cities. Countless roadside shrines, some of which are extraordinary manifestations of folk art, also testify to the pervasiveness of the Catholic religion in Chilean society.

Chile. Monique Larouche, M.I.C. (standing, 2nd l.) and the novices with parishioners of *La Palma*, Santiago





Ancud, Chile. Enthusiastic members of the Holy Childhood. Gisèle Lachapelle, M.I.C.



Lima, Peru. Maria Arroyo, M.I.C. facilitates a seminar for students of Colegio Maria de la Providencia.



Missionary Dynamism

Mission and Commitments

Our Sisters' hope-filled responses to today's needs are expressed in their statements of mission and commitments. In an earnest search for God's will, they faithfully undertake an on-going discernment on the needs and the cries of the people with whom they work and live, as well as on the ways they should respond to them. They have declared a Mission Statement derived from this awareness, and developed a Pastoral Plan singling out the commitments that will actualize their mission: *To go, proclaim and witness to the gratuitous and universal love of the "good Lord" in order to make disciples of the Kingdom in Latin America.*

A close look at the commitments allows us to catch a glimpse of the significant part our Sisters take as they journey with the peoples of Bolivia, Peru and Chile. An essential element of their mission is their com-



Cochabamba, Bolivia. At a retreat for religious animated by Éliette Gagnon, M.I.C.



Lima, Peru. Participants at a holistic formation workshop given by Carmen Ménard, M.I.C. (1st row, 2nd r.)

Peru. Young women experience a mission stage at a mining community, an activity organized by Agnès Bouchard, M.I.C. (1st r.). Jéssica Arévalo, M.I.C. (1st l.).



mitment to proclaim Jesus Christ out of Gospel-spirited intercultural communities integrated into the culture and the historical process of the people.

Missionary Animation

The missionary vitality shown by our M.I.C. pioneers has multiplied over the years and enthusiasm for mission remains vibrant. More than ever, the Sisters are determined to be women in Thanksgiving, ready to respond to missionary situations and to commit themselves especially in favour of the outcast. With audacity, they engage themselves to energize their commitment to mission animation by participating in vocation outreach and the companionship of persons called to missionary life, the creation of new forms of animation which respond to the needs of today, the formation for missioning within the local church and elsewhere and sharing the spirituality of Thanksgiving, source of missionary dynamism. Special focus is given to the holistic formation of Christian leaders, especially through workshops, sessions and retreats.

Bolivia. Anita Perron, M.I.C. (standing, 4th l.), with university students of Cochabamba aspiring to be JASMIC members (our Youth Associates)



Vocation Ministry

Convinced that no local Church can be adequately formed and mature unless mission outreach and witness characterize its identity, the Sisters emphasize the universal call to mission and commit themselves to *engage audaciously in the M.I.C. vocation ministry*. They take a variety of initiatives to stir up the dynamism of their local Churches for sending out and receiving missionaries.

At present, two postulants at our Postulate in Bolivia and four novices at the Novitiate in Peru undergo the initial phases of their formation in view of becoming members of our Institute. Coming from different cultures, they share the treasure of the call to mission in international fraternities.

Recent years have seen our young Sisters of South America participating in mission *ad extra* as missionaries in Africa, Japan, Hong Kong and Canada. Our missionaries of other nationalities undertake the study of Spanish, the official language of the three countries.



Cochabamba, Bolivia. A vocation discernment session animated by Leticia Dotollo, M.I.C. (at centre) and Isabel Ayala, M.I.C., directress of Postulants (1st r.)



Lima, Peru. The Novitiate Community. The four novices and Claire Desrochers, M.I.C. (2nd row, l.), followed by Rosario Zari, M.I.C., directress of Novices, and Dolores St-Cyr, M.I.C.

Option for the Youth

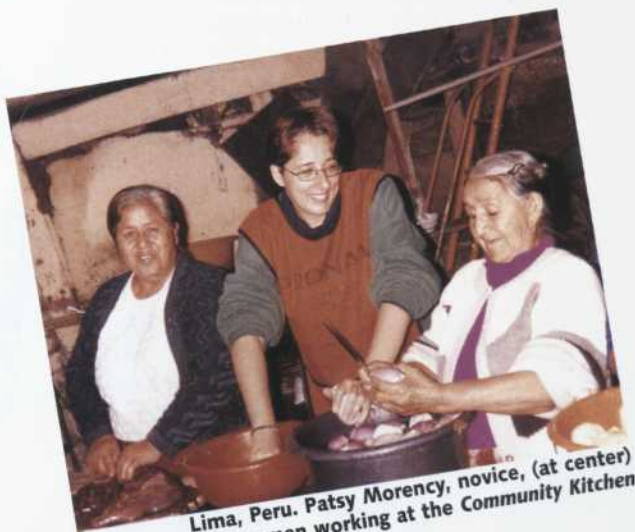
Our presence and service in the midst of young people is a reality in all the M.I.C. communities. Among a variety of youth activities and projects being implemented, the Sisters of South America have been hosting for some years now, small groups of Canadian youth on short-term mission experiences. These mission stages of at least five weeks may prepare some among the participants to hear the call to the missionary life and incite them to complete a more explicit formation in the near future.

Promotion of Women

In the different milieus where the Sisters live and work, the ministry of the promotion of women is given special attention. The Sisters are well-aware of the important role that women carry out, in particular those who live in urban marginal and rural neighbourhoods, in the organization, consolidation and development of community kitchens, community gardens, health committees, Mothers' club, etc. Today these organizations have obtained legitimacy and are recognized in each of the areas where they operate.



Peru. Youth leaders of Tate with Jeannine Boily, M.I.C., in charge of the parish



Lima, Peru. Patsy Morency, novice, (at center) with the women working at the Community Kitchen



Lima, Peru. At the *Colegio Maria de la Providencia*, our high school students welcome a government representative to their science exposition.



Peru: Lima
Administrative Council of the *Colegio Maria de la Providencia*:
Louise Laberge, M.I.C., (1st l.)
and Maria Arroyo, M.I.C., (1st r.)



Bolivia. Village catechists with Nancy Paz, M.I.C., Pastoral Coordinator

In view principally of the promotion of women as the proponents of change in their society and in a perspective of faith, justice and dignity, our Community maintains up to the present, the *Colegio Maria de la Providencia* in Lima, Peru and the *Institute of Rural Education* (IER) under the Archdiocese of Cochabamba in Bolivia.

The *Colegio Maria de la Providencia*, implements a well-integrated and comprehensive curriculum for the Elementary and Secondary levels. This school year, it counts an enrolment of 484 students. The school's educational program aims to develop in them the qualities of responsible and service-oriented persons, appreciative of their Christian and cultural traditions. Working hand in hand with dedicated lay personnel, our Sisters spare no efforts to foster Gospel values, love for our Blessed Mother and a missionary spirit. Today, the school community speaks highly of the dynamic life that continues to blossom since the school's foundation in 1962.

The Institute of Rural Education, established in 1978, welcomes each year some forty young women. Courses of home economics, sewing and handicraft, reading and writing,

first aid, agriculture and catechesis are directed toward strengthening their self-esteem and their sense of community. In the second year, about ten are chosen among those who may have the desire and the aptitude to become assistant nurses in rural areas. They follow a program of courses and go through practical internships in two hospitals. Being thus prepared, they can work in a small dispensary in their own village.



Dr. Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.,
Health Programme Coordinator
at IER, hands over a first aid kit
to a new graduate.



Peru. Wilma Jaldin (l.) and
Margarita Tuesta (r.),
novices are involved in pastoral
work among the street
children of Lima.

Solidarity with the People

Identifying with the people's yearnings, struggles for justice and hope for a better life, our Sisters' commitment to work particularly among the poor and the marginalized remains actual and exigent. They audaciously embrace as one of their commitments of priority to *live out the Mission with the people, in solidarity with them in their efforts to achieve respect for the dignity of the person, for life, ecology, reconciliation and peace.*

The Sisters are involved in different ministries through their insertion in the overall pastoral work in their respective dioceses: family visits and catechesis, training of catechists, religious instruction in public schools, *Holy Childhood*, *Legion of Mary*, *Youth without Frontiers* and others.



Cochabamba, Bolivia. Rose-Alice Rousseau, M.I.C., makes regular visits to women prisoners.



Bolivia. Rita Ostiguy, M.I.C., works at a
Centre for children of inmates at San
Sebastian Prison in Cochabamba.

Chile. Gilberte Perras, M.I.C. (2nd l.),
travels from one island to another to
visit families of Ancud.





Lima, Peru. To highlight the opening of the M.I.C. Centennial Celebration, our Sisters of South America are joined by some 400 participants at the Symposium on the Mission held in January 2002.

Each new modality of insertion confirms a response to a pastoral priority of the diocese, always in the line of evangelization, holistic formation or missionary promotion. Within this framework, apostolic works for our Community become manifold.

Beneficiaries of the Sisters' pastoral services include the workers in the mines, handicapped people and street children, the prisoners, particularly women prisoners and their children. Working in the scattered villages of rural parishes, the Sisters devote time and energy to the organization of the *comunidades campesinas*. They spare no effort in the evangelization of adults and in catechesis for children in the rural schools. As well, our Sisters work with people who have migrated to urban areas. They help to organize small Christian communities, promote self-help programs and encourage the people to become actively involved in their own evangelization.

A Continent of Missionary Hope

Over the years, our Sisters have had a remarkable influence in education and health and have left a rich and beautiful heritage. Education, pastoral and social activities are bearing fruits. The variety of ministries the Sisters presently undertake all bear the seal of their steadfast

concern to collaborate in the holistic formation of persons so that they may live with faith the new challenges of the third millennium.

The real wealth of South America thus lies in its close-knit, devoted and hardworking families. With courage and perseverance, the people persistently organize themselves into small Christian communities and work together in myriad ways to try to make a better life for themselves and their children.

One with the people and in accord with the aspirations and initiatives of Church and lay leaders, our Sisters of South America are happy and confident that a new continental missionary thrust is coming to blossom, making this land a continent of missionary hope, open to welcoming and sustaining the missionary springtime announced to the world by Pope John Paul II. ✱



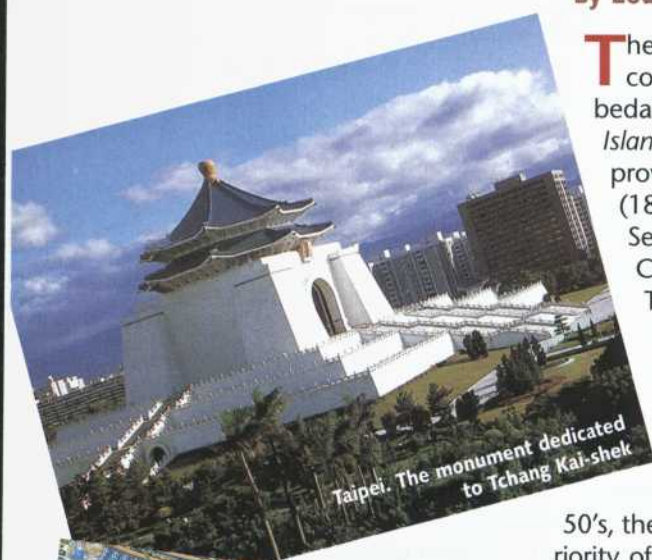
Looking to a future bright with promise!

Photo: S. Thissen

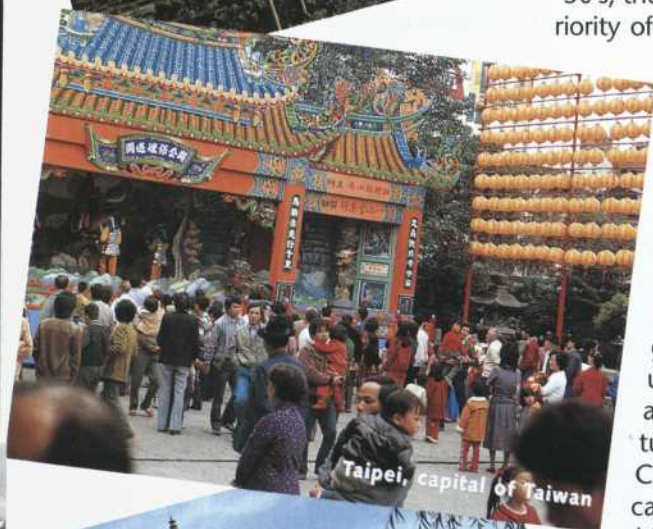
TAIWAN



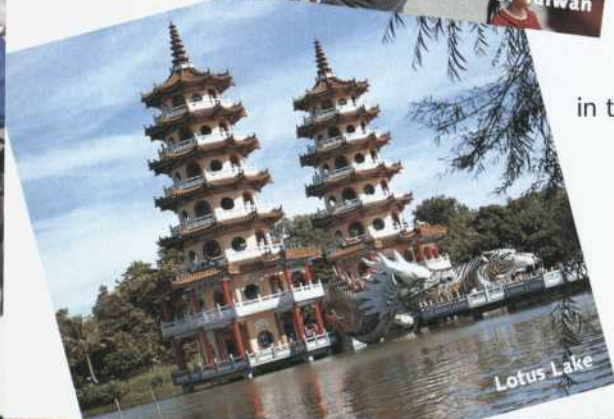
By Louise Denis, M.I.C.



The Island of Taiwan is a little more than a hundred kilometres off the coast of Mainland China. In 1590, a crew of Portuguese seamen bedazzled by its natural beauty named it *Ilha Formosa*, the *Beautiful Island*. First a protectorate of the Empire of China, and then a Chinese province, the island was ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and its occupation that lasted for 50 years. After the Second World War, China recovered the island and gave it back its Chinese name: Taiwan. In 1949, after the Communist Party of Mao Tse-tung won the civil war in Mainland China, Marshall Tchang Kai-shek took refuge in Taiwan with members of his army and of his Nationalist government. He proclaimed Taipei the provisional capital of China. This status remained until the United Nations, in 1971, recognized Peking as the seat of the Chinese government.



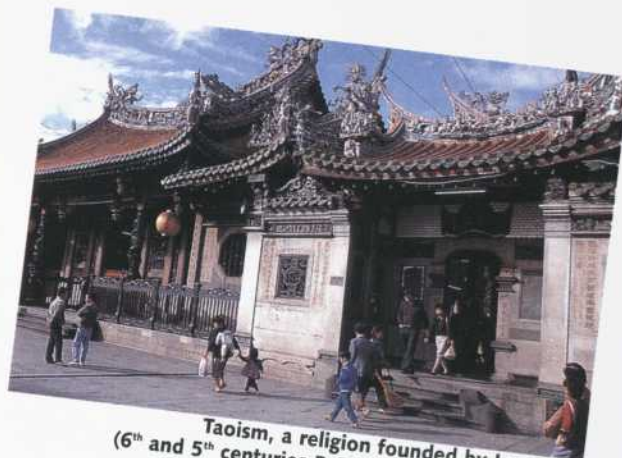
Eager to curb the expansion of Communism in Asia in the early 50's, the Western powers used Taiwan as a model to demonstrate the superiority of the Capitalist system. Investors developed an economy based on technological progress and the export of manufactured goods. The natural qualities of patience, dexterity and tenacity of the Chinese people helped Taiwan to achieve economic success and made it a nation whose manpower is the best qualified in the industrialized world. At this period, too, agricultural reform assured the financial viability of the Island's main farming produce.



The island's population of 23 million is, for the most part, of Chinese origin. It also has minority groups of aborigines immigrated a long time ago from Indonesia and Malaysia. Though urbanized and industrialized, Taiwan has preserved natural sites of awesome beauty and temples representing the delicate architecture of ancient China. The world's largest collection of ancient Chinese artefacts, jades, porcelains, bronzes and paintings on silk can be seen in the *National Palace Museum* of Taipei. Many items in this collection were brought by Tchang Kai-shek at the time of his exile, and came from treasures accumulated by the Chinese emperors in the *Forbidden City* of Peking.



The pioneers of our missions of Taiwan:
Jeanne Bastien, M.I.C., Simone Boicclair, M.I.C.,
Imelda Laperrière, M.I.C.



Taoism, a religion founded by Lao Tseu
(6th and 5th centuries B.C.), penetrates the whole
of Chinese culture

A Mission of Love and Service

From Mainland China to Taiwan

In the years that followed the Communist takeover in Mainland China, the Catholic institutions were confiscated and the missionaries expelled. This is how, in 1953, the last of our Canadian Sisters in this mission left the country. One year later, at the request of the Jesuit Fathers, three of our former missionaries of China came to Taiwan and settled in Kuanshi, a small town of the prefecture of Hsinchu. At the time of their arrival, the city's population numbered 35,000, not a single one of them Catholic. Already familiar with the Mandarin language, our missionaries helped with the running of a kindergarten and engaged in home visitation. In that post-war era, the needs were great. Other Sisters joined the initial group and responded to those needs. Dispensaries and maternity clinics were opened and social projects initiated. Along with the other missionaries who had come from China, our Sisters brought a new breath of life and an era of prosperity for the expansion of Catholicism in Taiwan.

Traditions Dating Back Thousands of Years

Staunch conservator of China's art, Taiwan is also the preserver of the oldest religious traditions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and the worship of the ancestors. These traditions have shaped the life and culture of the



Confucianism is a philosophy.
It does not refer to any divinity.



Buddhism has been adopted by China as
a popular religion.

people for thousands of years. They provide interpretations of the Absolute, of the human person and its existence, of the evil that exists in the world and of the ways to free oneself from it.

Half a century after the massive arrival in Taiwan of missionaries from China, we find a Church whose membership numbers 8% of the population. Aware of the rich Chinese cultural heritage and of the transformations currently taking place in Taiwanese society, our Sisters state as follows their mission in this Church: *To proclaim Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him and to accompany the Christian people in the deepening of their faith that they may bear witness to Jesus Christ and to the Gospel in the midst of this pluralistic society.*



Community celebration on the occasion
of the final profession of
Agnes Mao, M.I.C. (1st row, 2nd r.) and of
Theresa Wang, M.I.C. (1st row, 3rd l.),
as well as the silver jubilee of
Martha Lwo, M.I.C. (1st row, 3rd r.) and of
Eulalia Loreto, M.I.C. (1st row, 2nd l.)



Church of Guanhsi

Christian Presence in Education

In spite of the fact that the Church in Taiwan is a minority, it has an impressive network of educational institutions ranging from kindergarten to university. From the time when our first missionaries arrived, in 1953, our kindergarten in Guanhsi has been teeming with activity. We receive every year approximately 100 pupils aged 4 to 7. Even though most of them are non-Christians, they are given catechetical lessons and participate in the religious activities of the centre. The agenda of the school also enables us to meet the parents on a regular basis and to create bonds with the families of our pupils. A few of them request catechetical or Bible lessons in order to accompany their children through the process of preparing for the reception of the sacraments. Our presence in the field of education still remains the most effective means of sharing the Word of God and of making known the Christian values that lead to the awakening of faith in some people.



Juanita Liong, M.I.C., during a handicraft class



Maria Goretti Sun, M.I.C. (last row, r.), directress of the Kindergarten of Guanhsi and Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C. (3rd row, l.), for whom the greatest missionary joy is to discover God's action in children's hearts.

At the Service of Life

As a nurse specialized in counselling, Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C., is ever involved in various activities related to education. The common denominator of her commitments is promoting the life and dignity of persons. She accompanies so-called *dysfunctional* families and helps children with learning or behavioural problems. To this effect she uses various approaches such as workshops on awareness and active listening, methods of psycho-spiritual integration and play therapies. The purpose is to create a climate of trust among these people who need help because of their great frailty and deep suffering, in order to grow in their richness of being. This ministry fosters the overall development of persons and the *growth of life*.

Theresa Chang, M.I.C., teaches catechism to little ones.



Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C. (1st row, l.), at a session given to teachers at Huankuang, a Centre for children with learning disabilities.





Several Christian communities of Taiwan manifest an extraordinary vitality and an astonishing missionary involvement.



Rosa Yung, M.I.C. (2nd r.), pastoral agent for the sick and Theresa Chiang Pin Hua, postulant (1st r.)

Major Challenges for the Church

A Leaven in Society

The theme *Jesus Christ, the Saviour, and His mission of love and service* chosen for the 1998 Synod of Asia is quite appropriate for Taiwan. The document focuses on the person of Jesus Christ and on the mission in which the Church and the Christian people are invited to take part.

That is the spirit in which the Christian community of *Holy Rosary Church* lives out its pastoral commitment. The pastoral team, of which Nancy Vy-So, M.I.C., is a member, provides catechetical instruction, sessions in preparation for the sacraments, Bible study, retreats for young people and married couples; it also sees to the animation of various parish organizations.

On their part, parishioners are invited to visit the sick, the elderly and the prisoners and to get involved on behalf of those in need.



Françoise Larouche, M.I.C. (r.), wearing the traditional costume of the Atayals, accompanied by a member of the tribe during a feast in Shuitien

This is how the Gospel takes root in the lives of the people and reveals the authentic face of Christ's compassion, love and care for each and everyone. Moreover, in this parish, a programme of spiritual formation is offered to help deepen the people's Christian identity that will allow them to witness to Gospel values in their milieu. Our Sisters also take part in the pastoral activities of the *Holy Family Parish* of Taipei, where 28 adults and 11 children received Baptism last year at Easter.

Cultural Minorities

There are in Taiwan aborigines who are descendants of the first inhabitants of the island. They form nine tribes and live in the valleys of the undulated plateaus or in the mountainous regions. Their number and the cohesion of their cultural heritage are still significant. Though many of them practice the traditional religion of their ancestors, there are in their midst a few young and dynamic Christian communities. Two of our companions, Françoise Larouche, M.I.C., and Rossina Bautista, M.I.C., live among one of these groups called the *Atayals*. They share their life, their joys, their struggles and their hopes, and accompany them on the journey of their Christian life.

Parish pastoral council of *Holy Rosary* of Taipei. Nancy Vy-So, M.I.C. (1st row, 3rd l.), and Rev. Marcel Hoffart, C.I.C.M., pastor (2nd row, 4th l.)



Rossina Bautista, M.I.C. (2nd l.), Assistant Provincial, with parishioners of Shuitien





The Need for Social Involvement

Since the 60's, Taiwan experiences a spectacular economic growth. This accelerated development has created social and environmental problems. Although the government has made considerable progress at the level of democracy and respect of the rights of persons, there still exist marginalized groups among which are often found women, the handicapped, elderly persons, aborigines. The emigrants and refugees are also more exposed to exploitation both economically and morally. They often work in conditions entailing health hazards.

The Church of Taiwan tends to defend the rights of persons. It gives a necessary impetus for the formulation and application of a legislation touching the reform of working conditions of employees and the improvement of security measures at their work places. Eulalia Loreto, M.I.C. and Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C., both from the Philippines, are engaged in educational services, in pastoral assistance and animation among migrant workers from the Philippines. They accompany them in the process of integration to a new culture and invite them to witness to their Christian faith in their milieu.

Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C. (seated, l.), with members of the Legion of Mary



Eulalia Loreto, M.I.C. (1st row, 1st r.) and a group of Filipino migrant workers



Umbrella factory. According to government statistics, more than 92,000 migrant workers in Taiwan come from the Philippines.

Religious Awakening

Though the majority of the people of Taiwan are profoundly attached to their customs and religious traditions, here as everywhere else, society is being swept by a trend of secularism and a transformation is visibly taking place in the practices once supported by the people's faith and way of life. We encounter more and more individuals who feel in their hearts a call to other values. This religious awakening goes beyond mere curiosity. It translates into the search for a new way to connect one's beliefs with one's personal spiritual experience. In this quest for truth, the Church recognizes the presence of the Spirit who calls human beings to the *fullness of life*. What differentiates Buddhism and Taoism from Christianity is, above all, the Christian statement that human beings cannot be freed from suffering or from the problems that deeply afflict their hearts merely by relying on a form of wisdom or on ethical and meditative practices as effective as these may be. God alone saves and sets human beings free from their finite condition and from their limitations.

All of life's important moments are marked by a visit to the temple or to the pagoda.



The *Jesuit Centre of Spirituality* of Taipei, where Marthe Lai, M.I.C., works, provides companionship on the journey of spiritual growth. By means of Bible reading and contemplation, the companions help persons who are searching to discover the God of Jesus Christ and His saving action in the life of His people. This God of love, faithfulness and mercy is the One inviting them to a life of intimacy with Him.



Marthe Lai, M.I.C., Provincial Superior (1st row, 2nd r.) Marguerite Liao, M.I.C. (standing, at centre) and next to the right, Nancy Vy-So, M.I.C. during a formation session on spiritual accompaniment in Taipei

Each of our local communities in Taiwan welcomes lay people who express the desire to live out their Christian faith according to the spirituality of Thanksgiving which we inherited from Délia Tétreault. Our Sisters meet with them on a regular basis for moments of sharing and prayer.

Presence among the Youth

The mission of evangelization entrusted by Christ to His Church is also intended for young people. Various Christian movements are available to them in the schools and parishes to help them deepen their faith so that they may be able to share it. The Eucharistic Crusade is one of them. Marthe Lwo, M.I.C., who is herself a former Crusader, facilitates the meetings and takes part in the annual gathering aimed at reinforcing and renewing the commitment to follow Jesus and make Him known. Our Sisters of Taiwan welcome young girls who come to the city to study or to work. They find in our houses a family spirit



Marcelle Paquette, M.I.C. (3rd row, 1st l.), Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C. (2nd row, 2nd l.), with a group of ASMIC (Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception)



Several of our Sisters and some young people at a reflection meeting on religious life

Taipei. Residents at the Délia Tétreault Centre with Martha Lwo, M.I.C. (2nd row, 1st l.) Marie-Claire Labelle, M.I.C. (1st row, at centre) Theresa Wang, M.I.C. (1st row, 2nd r.), Provincial Councillor



expressed in the sharing of tasks, the respect of others and an atmosphere of openness and trust.

The religious Congregations of women have played a significant role in the work of evangelization realized in Taiwan over the last century. They have given a strong impulse to the promotion of women through the work they have accomplished in the areas of education and health care and in their services to the poorest of the poor. These commitments and living witnesses have fostered the flowering of religious vocations.



The Mission Goes On

Networks of Solidarity

Like those who preceded them, our Sisters of Taiwan are involved in the missionary activity of their Church by witnessing to the Good News and committing themselves to pastoral activities that lead them beyond their own boundaries. They participate in formation programmes among religious communities and among Christian leaders of Mainland



Mary Hsu, M.I.C. (at center), animator of a session on spirituality given to some religious of Shanghai



Lucy Hsu, M.I.C., happy to deepen the spiritual legacy handed down to us by our foundress, Délia Tétreault



Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C. (1st row, 1st l.) and Celia Chua, M.I.C. (at centre), during a meeting of AMOR. In 2003, Taiwan will host the General Assembly of AMOR and our Sisters will be involved in the preparation of this event.

China. They also cooperate in humanitarian projects such as bringing comfort and support to people suffering from leprosy.

Living in a rapidly changing society, the women religious communities of Asia and Oceania felt the need to come together, in 1972, forming an association which they named AMOR (Asian Pacific



Meeting of Religious Women). Every two or three years, this association holds a General Assembly enabling the members to form bonds of solidarity among themselves and to develop a collective awareness of issues regarding society and the Church in today's world. Religious

communities are invited to promote justice and peace, transform mentalities, uphold rights of women, children and the oppressed and build a society based on respect for the dignity of the human person.

Signs of Hope

Asia is home to two thirds of the world's population; that means 4 billion people, a mere 3% of which are Catholic. Pope John Paul II has stated more than once during his visits to the continent that *Asia would be the great missionary challenge of the third millennium.*

Evangelization in Asia is a call, an invitation to continue the mission given by Christ to the Church. It is achieved through the living witness of the messengers, through action for the promotion and liberation of human beings, through dialogue with brothers and sisters who adhere to a different faith or wisdom, through discernment of the signs of God's presence upon which Gospel values can be implanted. The Church in Taiwan must pursue with energy and determination its mission of love and service in the manner of Christ: *I am in your midst as the one who serves. (Lk 27: 27).*



By Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

Centennial Celebrations

Over the past months, the festivities of our Centennial Year have punctuated our lives. Those unique moments were sources of great joy. Let us recall them here with gratitude.

Chicoutimi, Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Rimouski, St-Hyacinthe, Ottawa, Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Joliette, Montreal, Vancouver... From the very beginning, the life of our Institute has been deeply bound with the life of those dioceses. We have worked closely with them in raising missionary awareness through our visits in the schools and parishes, through the promotion of our magazine, *Le Précurseur* and *The Precursor*, and through our services to the immigrants. We have also been in close contact with several generations by working for many years in education, in sewing clubs for the missions, in houses of closed retreats and in health services at the *Chinese Hospital* of Montreal and at *Mount St. Joseph Hospital* in Vancouver. Celebrating the event of our Centennial with those diocesan Churches, among numerous friends, benefactors and families who have been supportive of our missionary endeavours, was an unforgettable experience. These gatherings have re-energized our commitment to the Mission and renewed, in those environments, the awareness of the M.I.C. world.

A medium dedicated to broadcasting religious information and concerned with spiritual and social culture, *Radio Ville-Marie* put on a series of 14 programmes on the occasion of our Centennial. Through the interviews aired in this series, some of our Sisters had the chance to make better known to the public the life of Délia Tétreault, her charism and her great projects at the service of the Mission, as well as the history of our Congregation, its spirituality and its international character. These missionaries also spoke of the deep values of the peoples to whom they were sent and of the efforts of Christians in other countries to instil Gospel values in their culture. Surely, by reaching a vast audience, these testimonies opened new spiritual horizons and revived in some the desire to be missionaries at home or abroad.

Remembering the past and retrieving pieces of one's childhood or earlier adult life... was all part of the reunions organized for the former students and teachers of our institutions of Montreal and Granby. In those *Alma Mater* gatherings, looking at photographs was a major activity..., pictures recalling the past... and those telling the story of what our Institute has become. Thanksgiving, joy, fraternity and worldwide solidarity permeated these reunions and the grace of our Centennial yielded its fruit.

In other countries of the world, in *Asia, Africa* and *South America*, the Sisters of our Congregation celebrated our Centennial with all the cultural richness of their local people. Vibrant expressions of thanksgiving filled magnificent celebrations inspired by the legacy of Délia Tétreault. The history of our Institute was recalled in popular festivities, theatrical performances, missionary exhibitions, lectures and radio programmes.

To all those who joined in our hymn of thanksgiving during our Centennial Year and who generously shared their talents, time and joy, we say *Thank you* from the bottom of our hearts!

A CD-ROM and a mini-album in remembrance of our Centennial were produced, inviting you to become part of our family history and to travel the roads of the mission. The items are available to you for the overall price of \$15.00. Contact the following address:

M.I.C. Multimedia Service,
314, Côte Ste-Catherine Road,
Outremont, QC H2V 2B4
Telephone: (514) 495-1551
Fax: (514) 495-8936
E-Mail: micauvi@biz.videotron.ca



In the Garden of God



Pauline Pigeon, M.I.C. 1913 - 2002

(Sr. Marie-Hortense)
Montreal, Quebec.

In spite of her frail health, Sister Pauline worked for 30 years in the printing shop of the Mother House. It was a demanding job if we consider the technical means of the time. A woman of prayer, she radiated serenity and joy. Her repartees full of humour and her giftedness for story-telling brought sunshine into everyone's life.



Gertrude Laforest, M.I.C. 1916 - 2002

(Sr. Marie-des-Oliviers)
(Montréal-Québec)

Sister Gertrude devoted herself unsparingly to the lepers of Shek Lung in China, then to the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong in the years around 1950. She then worked 38 years among the Chinese immigrants of Quebec City, bringing them the Gospel and doing everything possible to make them happy.



Lucienne Fillion, M.I.C. 1919 - 2002

(Sr. Louis-Marie)
Kénogami, Quebec.

Sister Lucienne put her whole heart and her exceptional qualities as an educator into her mission among children and teenagers in the schools of Quebec. Struck by illness, she then turned to a life of discreet service and intense prayer encompassing the whole world.



Jeanne Pelletier, M.I.C. 1917 - 2002

(Sr. Saint-Maxime)
St-Cyrille-de-l'Islet, Quebec.

In Cuba, Guatemala and Peru, Sister Jeanne combined quality parish ministry with the many tasks necessary for the smooth running of our houses. Gentle, patient and always smiling, she brought comfort and joy to those who benefited from her competence and devotedness.



Étienne Michaud, M.I.C. 1906 - 2002

(Sr. Thomas-de-Jésus)
St-André de Kamouraska, Quebec.

Sister Étienne was ardent and generous in important services: promotion of our magazine, *Le Précurseur*, work of closed retreats and office of the treasury. She also beautified the grounds of the Mother House, and through her years of volunteer work, cultivated hope in the hearts of people who suffered.



Marie-Paule Charbonneau, M.I.C. 1941 - 2002

(Sr. Yvon-Marie)
Mont-St-Michel, Quebec.

A missionary in Chile for 10 years, Sister Marie-Paule worked mostly in family catechesis and youth ministry. In Quebec, she became involved in communications, and despite a long illness, left us a valuable heritage in this area, giving a voice to the love that illuminated her life.



Gabrielle Brousseau, M.I.C. 1914 - 2002

(Sr. Sainte-Colombe)
(Québec-Québec)

Though very delicate healthwise, Sister Gabrielle nevertheless had a long missionary journey in Quebec. A musician gifted with a lovely voice, she was organist and choir directress in our houses while giving children piano lessons. She lived with confidence in God and in gratitude.



Marie-Anne Brochu, M.I.C. 1912 - 2002

(Sr. Jeanne-de-France)
St-Henri, Quebec.

Sister Marie-Anne gave 65 years of generous service in our major houses of Quebec, where she devoted herself to community tasks. Joy, confidence and thanksgiving were the fabric of her days of work. She drew from Délia Tétreault a profound missionary dynamism.

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to those who do not know it.*

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