

MIC MISSION NEWS

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CUBA

Being Faithful
in the Country
of Fidel

TAIWAN

So Small, Yet So
Grown Up

IN FOCUS

Joy...
Magical Moments



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

January 2007

For the Church in Africa:

May it become ever more the true witness of the Good News of Christ and promote reconciliation and peace in every nation.

February 2007

For the struggle against diseases and great epidemic in the Third World:

May this struggle find in the spirit of solidarity, ever more generous cooperation of governments.

March 2007

For those responsible for the young Churches:

May the training of catechists, organizers and lay people committed to the service of the Gospel be their constant concern.

MASSES FOR READERS' INTENTIONS OFFERED IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

January: *Canada*

February: *Cuba*

March: *Philippines*

April: *Haiti*

May: *Canada*

June: *Bolivia and Chile*

July: *Malawi and Zambia*

August: *Hong Kong and Taiwan*

September: *Madagascar*

October: *Peru*

November: *Japan*

December: *Canada*



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IN FOCUS



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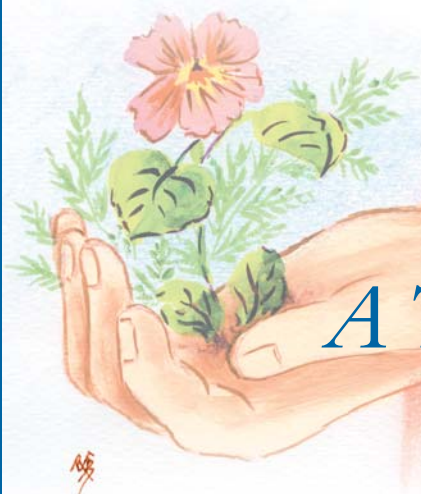
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EDITORIAL



A Tiny Bud of Joy!

Is it presumptuous to speak about joy? Who among us, upon waking up in the morning, does not wish to experience a magical moment during the course of the day? All human beings have a profound aspiration to live joyfully. In His Message to us, Jesus says: *May your joy be complete* (Jn 15:11). And He shows us the way to follow, namely, the Beatitudes: Happy the poor of heart; happy the merciful; happy are those who work for peace... (Mt 5:1.11). Do you believe His Words are still addressed to us today?

Is it possible to live joyfully in a world of turmoil, in a society that is sickly? Joy is often fleeting and rare in the midst of wars, violence, broken families, abandoned children. Our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, once said: *The bread most lacking in our world is joy*. Is this statement not relevant for us, today?

In this issue, we offer you a reflection on joy. It is like a little green bud placed in the palm of your hand: may it grow and bloom as a promise to happiness.

The section *In Focus*, entitled *Joy...Magical Moments*, contains spiritual and psychological elements to help us question ourselves and show that it is possible to live happily even in the midst of difficult times. The anchorage point lies deep within our being; there, we find our authentic connection to others and to the Other.

Let us turn all our senses to the present moment, where God is to be found. When we are aware and in touch, His Joy becomes ours and the tiny green bud flowers, filling our life with Invincible Joy.

Happy reading and let us remember to generously sow Joy for a better world.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

Drawing: Rosa Labrosse, M.I.C.

READERS' CORNER

lmicmissionnews@pressemic.org
calls out to you!

This column belongs to you. Share your impressions and comments with us in order to deepen our reflection. Make yourselves heard!

MIC Mission News does not publish unsigned letters, nor letters whose subject matter infringes on the journalistic code of ethics. We reserve the right to abridge letters.

Jeannine Casault, C.N.D.

I am renewing my subscription and I take this opportunity to congratulate you for the quality of your magazine. The well chosen texts, the exceptional presentation, the openness to the world and to others deserve a widespread circulation. Thank you so much.

Angeline Abel, Quebec

What a beautiful magazine! Friday I received the December issue of *Le Précurseur (MIC Mission News)* and this Sunday morning I took time to read it cover to cover.

The Editorial presents us a well-known Mary, but also unexpected in certain ways. The photos are magnificent. It is the first time I see Mary as pictured throughout the world. When I will travel to other countries I will certainly be more attentive to the way Mary is represented. Soon I will be leaving for China. There must be other representations of Mary apart from the one seen in the December issue. I will be attentive... Bravo! and continue your good work!

Ida Dionne, Collaborator, Gladwyn, N.B.

Your magazine has greatly improved. As a collaborator I have no difficulty recruiting new subscribers.

Fr. Gilbert Lemire, Nicolet, Qc

Congratulations for your mission magazine. It is magnificent: quality of texts, beautiful photos and images. It is to be continued. Thank you!



I am always moved to tears of joy when I see a life that was stifled open up and blossom. Are these mere fleeting emotions within me, evidence of a hypersensitive nature?

SO THAT HIS JOY MIGHT BE IN US

"Joy comes upon us like a gift. It happens to us in spite of ourselves, caused by something other than just our own will." (Agata Zielinski). And I can affirm that this "something other" which gives rise to joy within me is usually SOMEONE I take the time to see, hear, comfort, cheer up, or liberate.

By André Gadbois

When I saw Kevin, a Down's syndrome child integrated into a regular class, succeed, blossom and graduate from elementary to secondary school, I couldn't help blushing for joy. When I witnessed the autonomy and the creativity of ten unemployed people I had assembled in a poor neighbourhood to help out others like themselves in exchange for a small wage, joy filled my heart to overflowing. When I saw and heard colleagues stand up together in a general assembly and say no to an authoritarian and overbearing director general, wings of joy sprouted on my back. Were these mere emotions, fleeting joys, moments of overblown pride? Maybe... but today, far removed from these real-life events, overflowing joy still washes over me when I watch blind children playing a game of goal-ball, or when an alcoholic friend of mine tells me he's been sober for 37 months; or when I hear revellers tell me,

“Thank you, humanist!” because, as a volunteer for Operation Red Nose, I drive them home safely.

THE EFFECTS OF VICTORY

I realize that such joy is given to me whenever I get involved in an environment that corresponds specifically to what I am, in a world that stimulates my desire for life, a world in which life that has been struck down struggles to free itself. Like sap in springtime, this joy rises and transforms the tree I am from desire to reality, from the bud to the leaf, from the vision to its concrete manifestation... partial undoubtedly, but real nonetheless. It magnifies me and gives me direction. It confirms me. This joy is the effect of the victory of Life. Over time, these joys have come to endear me to others and have led me to give an important place to whatever produces them, even though they could never dispense me from life's struggles. They have greatly contributed to my being struck by these words of Jesus of Nazareth, *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.* (Jn 15:11)

A WORD FOR JOY

What does Jesus mean when He says, ‘*So that my joy may be in you*’? What is this world he can talk about with joy? With the Vatican II Council, we can affirm that it is Man considered in his unity and totality, Man, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will, that constitutes the core of the life of the Nazarene; and the Council has taken the time to define in detail that the poor and all those who suffer deserve particular affection. (*The Church in the World of its Time*, par.1). The words that Jesus addresses to “his” world have their roots deep in the history of his suffering people, *On that day the deaf shall hear... the eyes of the blind shall see... the lowly will ever find joy.* (Is 29:18-19) Or, *They shall not hunger or thirst... the LORD comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted.* (Is. 49:8-13) Or, *He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the broken hearted... to proclaim liberty to the captives...*

to announce a year of favour from the LORD” (Is. 61:1-3). Looking out over the crowds from a hilltop, surrounded by his disciples, he adopts as his own these words from Isaiah that announce certain happiness even while he underscores that Man has an ever greater responsibility to turn them into reality, *Yes, hold fast, you, the poor, the humble, those whose suffering is great, for the promised land will be given to you. And you, those who hunger for justice, who ardently seek reconciliation, you, the artisans of peace, the pure of heart, continue as you are; you are on the way, and partake in my joy, for you are building my Father's Kingdom. Yes, may your joy be great even when your involvement tears you apart, for it couldn't be any other way. Happy are you!* (Mt 5:1.11)

HERE IS FLESH OF MY FLESH!

When he saw Eve, Adam said, *Here is flesh of my flesh* (Gen 2:23), she who is my joy! Would it be so terrible and disgraceful to think that on the hilltop that allowed him to “commune” with Humanity and to speak with his disciples, Jesus might have said to himself, ‘Here is flesh of my flesh, those whose happiness I desire!’? In daily life, Jesus found his joy by giving hope, refreshing the weary, reconciling and liberating, restoring the dignity to the excluded, by “giving bread to the hungry and hunger to those who have bread” (Abbé Pierre)¹, by inviting people to share and recognize the equality of all before their Father. The joy he found there he gives in abundance to all those who humanize the immense family made up of all the peoples of the world. To his disciples who do it in His commemoration, and also to the men and women of good will who do it out of solidarity with the human race for, “whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Mt. 25:40) 

¹Henri Grouès surnamed l'Abbé Pierre founded in France the Emmaus Community in 1949 to help the homeless. He died January 2007.

About the author:

Married, and father of two children, André Gadbois, has a teaching experience: 20 years with disabled children and school director for 10 years. He is involved at the Montreal Archdiocesan Catechumenate and is the editor of their journal *Le Sénévé*. He offers his collaboration to *Le Précurseur* the French edition of the *MIC Mission News*.

Photo credit:

Lucille Métivier, M.I.C.



THE JOY AT THE HEART OF MY RELATIONSHIPS

Writing an article about the joys of my experience as a missionary in Taiwan and my return to Canada: an interesting chance to reminisce about the past eleven years. It all started when I first left for Taiwan...

About author:

In partnership with the MIC Sisters, Myriam lived five years as a lay missionary in Taiwan.

¹ In Taiwan, Buddhist and Taoist Temples witness the Chinese traditions.

Photo credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

By Myriam Laroche

A relationship faithful to what I am

In this perspective, my missionary commitment is for me an aspiration that I had the fortune to experience abroad and which I continue to experience in Quebec. It's therefore the kind of joy that's tied to a faithful relationship to what I am, what my values are and what my deepest desires are. During the first months in Taiwan, although I was expecting a *Wow! I'm a missionary!*, I have to admit that I was not anywhere close to Wow! Joy was difficult to feel, so numerous were the pitfalls that seemed to turn up in every shape and color in the Chinese culture. Still, thanks to human presence, both psychological and spiritual, a profound joy did continue to inhabit me in spite of all the complications I had to deal with on a daily basis.

Looking back over my missionary experience in Taiwan, happy memories come to mind. I realise that my joy increased as enriching relationships were born and devel-

oped, relationships that were closely tied to my ability to speak mandarin.

Enriching Interpersonal Encounters

Let's take a look at some of those joyful moments. First of all, at work with my colleague Ulan, a woman of great sensibilities and impressive personal qualities. Together we developed and led sensorial stimulation workshops, offered to people who seemed to be living in their own world. I remember the first workshops, in which we had no reactions at all from the participants. What self-searching we did! Then one day, one participant actually smiled, which lit a spark of life in the face of another, and so on. What joy we felt! In another activity, my colleagues were so glad to see the happiness in the faces of the patients because they were participating, each according to his own ability, in the fabrication and tasting of "woun dwoun", you know, the noodles in Wonton soup.

There was also the joy that I felt about the work my fellow missionaries were

doing. To name just a few, I think of my friend Kevin and his devotion to handicapped persons; of Peter and his team and their commitment to foreign workers; of the MIC missionaries involved in the Taiwanese Church. In short, contact with these people, through the events both big and small of daily living, was a constant source of joy.

I also remember my Taiwanese friends, and the exchanges and confidences we shared over a good meal. Or the MIC missionaries, when Marthe Lwo bought a kind of fruit that I had long wished to taste but which had a horrible smell that stank up the whole house. The day we shared the fruit was a time of joy in which we all enjoyed this succulent and delicious fruit. I felt like I was really a part of the MIC community in Taiwan, and a deep joy came over me.

When I think about it, I realize that my interpersonal relationships as encounters filled with the desire to be present to others, have been the main source of joy in my life.

My mission in Canada

You won't be surprised to read that since my return to Canada, my joy has been tied to the relationships I experience in daily life. There was the joy of coming back to family and friends, of studying counselling, of taking up work as a nurse in French and, for more than a year now, the joy of working in a centre for palliative care.

My joy reveals itself in the accompaniment of people at the end of their lives and of their families as they deal with the process of dying. You think it's strange to feel joy in the accompaniment of people who are in the final stage of their life? For me, it's a privilege to do work that allows me to be there for others and to look upon them with respect, thereby restoring dignity to these persons who have lost value in the eyes of a materialistic society that promotes values of performance and physical perfection. It's work that allows me to recognize and celebrate the life that is there and that remains present right to the end,

and to experience extraordinary relationships with ordinary and real people just by being present for them. Ultimately, for me it's all about continuing a mission, that of being present to others.

But what about my relationship with the Other? I can say that the missionary project in Taiwan was ultimately a personal

My relationship to God is made real now thanks to those special moments with people.



call to a ministry of presence. My relationship to God is made real now thanks to all the people I meet in daily life with whom I have the chance to experience special moments. God the all-present Other, lets me recognize Him and get to know Him in the looks, the words, the gestures and the presence of others whom I invite or who invite me to walk a mile with them, and who give me deep joy. God, the Other, stands at the center of my life and calls me to give meaning to my life through my commitment to persons at the end of their life and their families. God, the Other who reveals Himself and lets me take hold of Him, although only partially, can be found in the profound joy that lives at the heart of my being.

I have realized that for me, joy corresponds to an inward state of satisfaction tied to an aspiration or a desire hoped for, for oneself or for another. And yes, my joy is found in the heart of a relationship that seeks to be presence to oneself, to the other and to the Other. 



² Myriam (centre) with her Taiwanese friends



In Cuba, here and there along the roads, on hilltops and valleys, you can see a group of missionaries walking along. There are fourteen of them in all. They go from village to village. Do they walk two by two? Are they thrown out? Do people open their doors to them? According to young Sr. Zenaide, originally from Portugal, the Cuban thirst for God, after fifty years in the wilderness, is unquenchable.

By Brigitte Bédard

One day, some MIC missionaries decided to tour the outskirts of cities. They were worried about how the Cuban women, particularly those in the countryside, far from the centres and far from God, were being spiritually nourished.

At the beginning of this mission, the missionaries just went off on weekends. They walked for endless kilometres. They arrived in the villages exhausted, sometimes with worn out soles, but they set to work nonetheless.

This situation, however, didn't last for long, says Sr. Zenaide: *We very quickly had to reorganize our presence in these areas, where the women were eager to learn, but also because of the fatigue caused by the long roads and the lack of personnel. There are only fourteen of us MICs, eleven other religious, and only seven priests who go from village to village. Gradually, the groups grew and turned into basic communities, which included young people, children, and then men. We were no longer able to meet the needs in a single weekend. So we had to choose to stay in each one of the villages for two weeks instead of just on weekends.*

Wandering missionary

And so Sr. Zenaide became a wanderer! Since the beginning of the revolution in 1957 until now, the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception have chosen itinerant missions. After all, isn't this the kind of mission that Our Lord was most fond of?

Being Faithful
in the Country
of Fidel

Like in that time, it's probably the best way to reach people in certain countries. It's the only way for the women and children of the villages to hear a little bit about God.

Over time, the fourteen missionaries have become indispensable. The villagers just can't get enough of them. They not only want them but seek to know the how and why of their mission.

The work consists mainly of meeting requests, says Sr. Zenaide: *We organize meetings to deepen their religious knowledge. We have developed a faith education program that we've divided into modules. We go according to each person's rhythm and needs. Our desire is to foster a real encounter with God, to experience his presence, and to understand a little better how he acts in daily living.*

Sr. Zenaide sometimes feels like she's watering plants—God's waterer! Since the revolution, a lot of Cubans have been deprived of water, as communism demands. With her own eyes, she has seen that it's impossible to root out faith by imposing ideology, like the regime claims to have done. Here, God keeps revealing himself exactly where they wanted to kill him. In a place where according to all appearances he seemed dead... History is repeating itself! Sister has witnessed it as if she were standing at the foot of the cross.

Mission of faithfulness

Having been a missionary in Cuba for ten years now, Sr. Zenaide has had to openly choose to remain faithful to God and to the Church, although she is aware of the painful consequences of such faithfulness.

In day to day living, one feels a little like the first disciples, after the Cross... a mixture of terror and love that colours everything. Then, as the days pass, one sees brothers and sisters helping each other out courageously. One clings to the little things, like the church of Saint Cecilia, in the diocese of Gantanomo-Baracoa, which was so much in ruin that it hadn't even had a roof for several years; it was rebuilt with everyone's help, stone by stone, during a period of seven long years.

Since the revolution, it's literally among the ruins that Catholics have persevered in celebrating their faith, by gathering to pray

in spite of the restrictions, threats and risks.

Affirming one's faith is risky, particularly for Catholics, whose Church continues to denounce the policies and misdeeds of Fidel Castro's regime. The miseries of a Cuban Catholic are boundless: job loss, refusal of admission to certain programs of study, refusal of purchase permits for certain goods, threats, etc.

What is beautiful in all this is to see the Church constantly adapting, as it always has for 2000 years: *Before the revolution, the Church lived in a totally different reality. It collapsed after the arrival of communism, but not totally, since Cubans found ways to continue to believe. You might say that the Church has become an inspiration. Church leaders are speaking up: there was an apostolic letter to*



Sr. Zenaide meets a teenager
Photos credit: MIC

Sr. Zenaide sometimes feels
like she is watering plants
—God's Waterer!



the people written by the bishops; then there was John Paul II's visit in 1998... These are events that spoke eloquently, and which showed how far we have come since 1957. It's by interventions like these that a lot of Cubans from every social milieu are gaining confidence and are uniting around their pastors. Ultimately, communism has not influenced those who were profoundly Christian.

Sr. Zenaide hopes for only one thing: to share with the Cuban people the spirituality of Thanksgiving, to spread the experience of liberation and forgiveness. Inner liberty within outward oppression: that's the real Revolution. 🌿



So Small, Yet So Grown-up

They are so small, yet they must already be introduced to life. Play and learn! Is it possible to respect childhood years while responding to the demands of efficiency? This is the major challenge of all kindergartens. In Guanhsi, Taiwan, teachers have dared to explore new educational avenues.

By Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C.

They have not yet reached the age of six. Early in the morning, their working parents drop them off at the kindergarten and fetch them between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. All day, they are under the watchful eye of their teachers who commit themselves to giving them a solid foundation.

Beginnings of the Kindergarten in Guanhsi

In 1956, after the Maoist Revolution in China, the MIC Sisters arrived in Guanhsi, Taiwan. New in their milieu and seeking to be in contact with the people, they began by offering their services to the little ones. At that time, they were unique in opening a kindergarten; today there are approximately 12 to 15 kindergartens in the same city. When this service opened its doors, people in the vicinity were poor and could not afford a minimum fee. Today, the city is prosperous; very few families deprive themselves of such a service. Though competition is growing, the people, majority of whom are non Christians, continue to put their trust in the Sisters.

Training Character

Much attention is given to training the children on a human level: politeness, respect for others, hygiene. The little ones are also introduced to prayer and Christian values. No matter what the country, children are children and quarrels do happen: hitting each other, pulling hair, biting, kicking, these are actions that occur. They are

taught by Sr. Juanita to forgive and amend. She takes the two youngsters who caused the trouble aside, and the one who attacked first must gently pat the other where the hurt was done, so as to bring healing. The children never resist. A few seconds later, they laugh together and become good friends again. Attentive to her little kindergartners, Sr. Juanita never leaves a child isolated: she brings each one to the group and sees to it that integration takes place.

Sr. Maria-Goretti, directress of the centre, offers specialties that only she knows the secret of. Thanks to her expertise, children take pleasure in being initiated to mathematics using the Chinese abacus. They move the little balls around and enjoy the click-clack noise as if it were a musical instrument. Even before they reach school age they are introduced to basic computer notions. They recognize the written characters of their name and learn to write them. In small groups, they are taught music and, with musical instruments, they perform recitals and enchant the parents.

Meals are served class by class. Before eating the children thank the Lord for the food, this teaches them patience and courtesy. Parents confirm that their little ones often introduce this practice into the family.

A New Method for Practicing and Actively Learning English

To arouse interest in learning English, the teachers and MICs decided to plan an



A child must be surrounded with love and attentive care.



activity that would provide ways of putting into practice what the children learned. A mini restaurant was set-up which includes Chinese and Western foods. Sr. Mary Hsu teaches the children how to prepare sandwiches and small vegetables in vinegar. The toddlers follow attentively all the instructions and go about their chores with much joy and enthusiasm. The entire school personnel helps prepare the menu: cream of rice, juice extracted from the guava fruit which the children hand-pick in the schoolyard, and many other delicious foods.

Each child receives NT\$50 (CAN \$2.50) to buy his or her favourite food. The older ones wearing an apron and white cap made by Sr. Gabrielle, act as vendors. Pencils in hand, they go around taking orders and giving receipts. It's like a little beehive... everyone has something to do.

At the entrance, a little girl welcomes the clients and the teachers guide them. Each order costs no more than 50 cents: the children must return to the food counter until their purchase has come to a total of \$2.50. All this goes on in English. It is fantastic to see how children apply the words they have learned in class. Chuckles and laughter often fill the air. This game, though short, is greatly appreciated by all.

Counselling Offered

During activity time, it is easy to detect the children who have problems. To offset their deficiencies, counselling is in place. During the counselling sessions, a child is

invited to play in a sandbox with toys of his or her choice. One day, a young boy opted for a truck and a small car; with the car, he kept pushing the truck with determination. He was silent. Suddenly, he abruptly pushed the truck and overthrew it. The boy seemed relieved. After a few questions, the therapist discovered that the boy was traumatized by his father. How to help this child? She began dialoguing with the parents and gave them some advice in regards to their actions and ways of approaching the boy. The same is done to protect the toddlers from sexual abuse. Using dolls and drawings, a child expresses his or herself; in turn, the therapist can help him or her discover beauty and joy in life, thus enabling the little one to be as happy as the other youngsters.

Childhood is a determining stage in life. It is a time of learning within a loving and trustworthy environment. Isn't the goal of a kindergarten to provide the child with a space where constructive experiences can take place? Where discoveries are made? Where pedagogical activities designed for children in their age-group assure them opportunities for an integral development? They are so small... yet so grown-up! 🌸

About the author:

Sr. Huguette, nurse, therapist, with pastoral experience, worked 27 years in Taiwan. She is now in Montreal and is a collaborator at the *Centre Le Pèlerin*.

Counselling session
Photo credits: MIC



Quebec City: *The Eucharistic Congress in 2008*



49th INTERNATIONAL
EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS
QUEBEC CITY, CANADA 2008

A demonstration of faith in the making!

With the theme: “The Eucharist, Gift of God for the Life of the World,” the Canadian Church will be celebrating the 49th International Eucharistic Congress. In 2007, each issue of this magazine will offer a reflection to help our readers prepare for this exceptional event.

By Father Charles Picot



His Holiness Pope Pius X
(Giuseppe Sarto, 1903-1914)
referred as: The Pope of
the Eucharist

For further information:
www.cei2008.ca

About the author:

Father Charles Picot, an ecclesiastical lawyer for the Archdiocesan regional tribunal in Montreal, is chaplain at the Mother House of the MIC Sisters in Outremont, Montreal.

When we hear someone speak about a Eucharistic Congress, we immediately think of a large gathering, an imposing stage decor, groups of people walking in procession, others praying before a large monstrance. Evidently, these images do not reflect the long history of congresses. Where do these images come from? To find out, we must look into the past.

I will present a profile in four phases, of the Eucharistic Congresses, to help us prepare for the June 2008 Eucharistic Congress that will take place in Quebec City. This event will offer all who wish it, an opportunity to manifest their faith.

A Bit of History

The first international Eucharistic Congress was organized at Lille, France, in June 1881. Its theme was: “The Eucharist Saves the World”. This initiative is attributed to a French woman, Emilie Tamisier (1834-1910) and her spiritual director, blessed Father Antoine Chevrier (1826-1879). The idea came about in the wake of the Eucharistic Movement founded by Saint Pierre-Julien Eymard (1811-1868), founder of the Fathers and Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. The latter had a determining influence on Father Eugene Prevost (1860-1946) who was an apostle of Jesus as Host. Originally from St-Jerome, Quebec, he founded the Sacerdotal Fraternity and the Oblates of Bethany.

Subsequent Eucharistic Congresses took place in France, Belgium, and Switzerland.

They were considered local events. The goal was often to demonstrate the vitality and relevance of Catholicism, which was frequently the object of attack. Rightly so, the Congresses were held, for the most part, in times of trouble when French civil affairs were rather hostile toward the Church and its public display of worship. We need to recall the persecutions of religious communities which took place in France at the end of the 19th century and early 20th.

These great demonstrations of popular faith no doubt had an influence on the thinking of the Church. As of 1905, Pope Pius X, with his decree *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* (December 20, 1905), encouraged adults to receive communion frequently and, later (in 1910), invited children to do the same. The Pope himself presided over the Eucharistic Congress in 1905. It was held for the first time in the city of Rome. The first Congress outside Europe took place in Montreal in 1910.

With the election of Pope Pius XI, the Congresses expanded internationally. In 1922, a new Congress took place in the Eternal City and was presided over by the Pope himself. Throughout the years, these Congresses became more mission-oriented; they occurred in Chicago (1926), in Sydney (1928), in Carthage (1930) and in Manila (1937) where the theme was: “The Eucharistic Apostolate in the Mission.”

In the next issue of MIC Mission News, I will present the political and social impact of the 20th century Congresses. 

Joy... Magical Moments

Life teaches us that joy is a treasure;
a treasure so fragile, so transient...

More often than not our attention is drawn
toward the painful events of life: suffering,
sickness, the loss of a loved one. Yet Jesus
tells us: *Come, share the joy of your Master*
(Mt 25:21).

This Master is the *Master of Happiness*.
He is the abiding Source and the Way. (...) *I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete*
(Jn 15:11). When Jesus teaches us and invites
us to follow Him, He does not offer us simple
advice, but an event, an encounter. His
teaching is Life-giving (...) from it flow joy
and happiness: *Happy are those...* (Mt 5:5)!
Our heavenly Father wishes to transform us
into His Grace so that we may possess what
He Himself is: Joy, Happiness, Blessedness.

(*Feu et Lumière* – October 2, No. 254, P. 48)

Opposite: Wood-engraving by Louise Ladouceur,
Montreal artist.
Contact: louise.ladouceur032@sympatico.ca

Louise Ladouceur holds a bachelor degree in visual arts
from the University of Quebec in Montreal. She is a profes-
sional artist since 1980, gives courses in wood-engraving
and animates workshops. She participates in many events
offered by Graff Workshop.



THE INVINCIBLE JOY

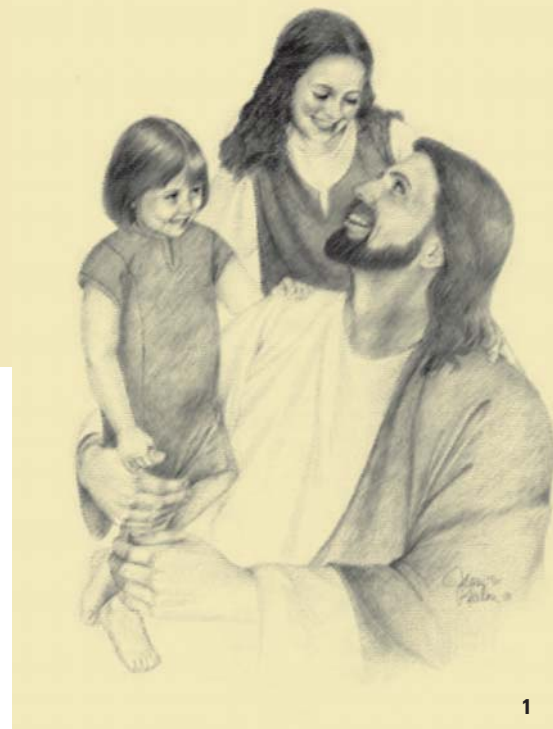
Joy, in spite of all, is a difficult subject to tackle... There is so much to sort out until you reach the source. So much interference to eliminate in order to hear the melody. And all the crutches to let-go-of in order to make headway. Nevertheless, experience shows that the prohibition can disappear at any moment as if by magic.

By Lytta Basset

Do we have the right to be happy? When joy happens on its own, there is no question asked: it's a magical instant, a period of intense happiness, a rush of 'joie de vivre'... There will always be time to declare, in retrospect, as though to convince oneself of the necessary return to normalcy. *At any rate, it was too wonderful to last!* But at the moment it happened, there was no wondering whether we had the right to experience the goodness of what was happening; it was given without notice, like those strong scents of the ocean as it washes over the sand dunes.

... this is a very sweet joy
that creates the most solid bond
between two human beings.

Yet great is the human capacity to snuff out feelings, including that of joy. We barely have any awareness of it, so ancient, sometimes, is the habit to shun such a feeling – as though it were an indecent guest. Why has anything that might resemble joy been such a taboo? Because of personal bonds of yesteryear: a father, a mother, a close relative in an unfortunate predicament, we would not allow ourselves... And the reflex has survived; the suffering of another per-



1

son is still experienced as a prohibition to savour the joy of living. The conditioning has amplified over the years: how can one be happy when the world is in such a bad shape? Finally, the moment of bereavement strikes at close range, feeling of shame and guilt increase tenfold; if we give in to the joy that is happening, would that not mean loving the person less, betraying or abandoning that person?

The question is relatively clear. Shall we forever allow others to kidnap the joy that was destined for us? Would being happy when someone else doesn't manage to be, constitute an insult to God Himself? To justify the repression of our feelings of joy, one could surely put forth the fact that not a single Gospel mentions the laughter or smile of Jesus. We are told of the wedding at Cana, of the numerous meals Jesus had with tax collectors, pharisees, intimate friends and crowds. We are told of parables filled with parties and banquets, of teachings about the joy of the Kingdom and of heavenly relationships among human beings, appreciating conviviality and the happiness of being together. But rare and discreet are the references to the personal expressions of his joy. (...) Take the Gospel of Mark which is the earliest one: strikingly, he never mentions the joy of Jesus. The only Gospel writer who does so several times is John, the one who terms himself as "the disciple Jesus loved." The phrase

rather leads me to think that John **felt especially loved** by Jesus. It is in his writings that we find the most vibrant testimony of the words and gestures of love of the Master.

An unconditional love that was so overwhelming that John discovered in it a joy that no one could take away from him. Indeed, about to be arrested and tortured to death, Jesus said to his friends: *Let my joy be in you and let your joy be perfect!* (Jn 15:11) Is there not such a thing as paradoxical joy? Had not Jesus experienced and felt it, how could he have spoken such words, three times, a few hours before his arrest? In the same sense, many persons are sensitive to the joy of others, which is expressed in tears. They know by experience that weeping is not always a sign of unhappiness. When you shed tears of compassion, communion, intense communication, this is a very sweet joy that creates the most solid bond between two human beings.

If Jesus was “true man” and not only “true God,” was He not bound to experience in some way the prohibition of joy? Was He not more than anyone aware of the misfortune of His fellow human beings? Did He not see all those He had not healed? (...) And yet, He exuded the “authority” of an eminently free being, happy to be beloved Son of His Father from whom He had come and to whom He was happily returning. The joy of Christ did not crush anyone. It constantly made room for others. It took the daily miracle of the encounter to discover the hidden gem of joy: anyone could sense its existence. (...)

As if to allow us to let joy in where no human being has had enough authority to release us from other people’s misfortune, Christ places joy at the heart of His teaching. Nine ways of being happy (Mt 5:3-12): something here is beginning to happen and will continue; it is anything but momentary joy. This kingdom is the Invisible. This “heavenly” experience already lived by human beings opens the Beatitudes with a verb at the present tense: Yes, “the kingdom of heaven is theirs!” The deeper their thirst for justice beco-

mes, the greater in them is the joy that rises from the encounter with others, whatever their situations of injustice may be.

How did Jesus go about lifting the prohibition of joy? By speaking from experience. (...) He Himself rejoiced at the sights of men and women experiencing in specific episodes of their daily life, this joy destined for every human being. *Happy are the eyes that see what you see!* (Lk 10: 23); *Happy are those who listen to the Word of God and keep it!* (Lk 11:28); *Happy are those servants whom the Master, when He comes, finds watching!* (Lk 12:37). A discreet way of saying, each time: if this happens to others, why not to you also?

Some will say: *There are people whose lives are so utterly destroyed that God alone can lift the prohibition of joy.* But what if they no longer believe in anyone and even less in an invisible God? In this case, what remains is the unpredictability of life. (...) One may no longer believe in God, but human beings remain, and there are many of them. No one knows who he or she will meet tomorrow or the next day, who will perhaps give their life a completely different turn if they only give-in to the encounter. ♡

¹The Smiling Jesus

(artist unknown)

The Gospels do not mention the laughter of Jesus and yet...

² Discover JOY the precious

pearl. Happiness of a grandfather holding his confident grandchild.

Photo credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

About the author:

Lytta Basset, Pastor of the Reformed Church of Switzerland, teaches theology at the University of Lausanne. She is involved in the Ecumenical movement.

La joie imprenable

(The Invincible Joy), Paris,

Éd. Albin Michel, collection.

“Spiritualités vivantes” 2004,

page 608. It is written in a pastoral perspective. Its connecting thread is the “Parable of the Prodigal Son” (Lk 15).



JUST LIKE A

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

*Once upon a time, out there,
in that country...
Appeared somewhat of a clown...
At least he was thought of that way...
Above his head,
he seemed to have a canopy.
His coat was made of four seasons.
The earth, all the earth, was his stage.
He laughed,... and laughed...
like a blessed one.
He spoke...
his words were as ancient as the world,
Forgotten like our first smiles.
He spoke... his words were avant-garde,
Then came a time
to put them into practice.
He spoke... against contemptuous smiles,
false pretences, self-pity,
Against the... you must not tell.*

This theme song entitled "The Beatitudes," by Patrick Richard, awakened within me the memory of a parable that I wish to share with you...

In a field as vast as the world,
people from all colours
throw stones at each other,
hurting some, killing others.
This infernal war
has no reprieve in sight.
Suddenly, amid the crowd,
appears a clown wearing long trousers
with huge pockets as big as his heart.
He walks peacefully
when a stone hits his back.
Calmly, he picks up the stone,
and slips it in his pocket...
A second one hits his chest.
He staggers...
but courageously picks it up

and puts it in his pocket.
A third... and a fourth...
He collects all the stones that hit him
and fills his pockets.
Heavy with weight,
his trousers fall to the ground!
Astonished, all people around him
begin to laugh:
A clown without trousers!
A clown without trousers!
Unintimidated, the clown patiently digs
a hole where he buries all his stones.

All around him,
people continue laughing and they forget
to throw stones at each other.
In small groups,
they begin digging holes in the earth,
here and there, to bury their stones.
As if they were searching
for the treasure of their heart...
they dig...
Suddenly they discover...
the JOY of working together,
of looking into each others eyes,
of appreciating and loving each other.

They are happy! And so is the clown!
His mission of peace has come to an end.
He tiptoes away, with a smile on his lips,
and he disappears the way he came!

Blessed, are the peacemakers!

*Once upon a time... out there...
in that country,
Appeared somewhat of a clown...
He spoke words of old? Words of new?
Then came a time to put them into practice
For all the world...
To live!*



BLESSED ONE!



Watercolour: Geneviève Dick
<http://creincarnation.googlepages.com/>

By Marie-Paul Ross, M.I.C.

FIRST PART



CAN ONE CHOOSE TO LIVE IN JOY?

THE FOUNDATIONS OF JOY ACCORDING TO SCIENCE

As much for women as for men, the emotion of joy comes up spontaneously, and the feeling of joy is elaborated over time. Learning to accept or create these human experiences can happen naturally, be learned, or even taught.

Joy is a molecule inscribed in each soul and in each cell in the body, just like distress, which is its opposite. This state, which is influenced by emotional experience, constantly calls for well-being. A person's emotional impulse moves in the direction of love and life, and thus towards plenitude and joy. If a human takes the time to become inwardly silent, he feels the message of a profound joy or an emotional joy. This experience of listening may also indicate obstacles to joy. Moreover, the human being

who is attentive to his profound nature discovers that joy is his daily bread. This fragile yet invasive state can be found in both men and women as an emotion or a sentiment.

There are different experiences of joy: the explosive joy in the noise of a "party", made-to-measure happiness, and joy in its immediate, fleeting, hysteric or euphoric forms.

MY CHOICE IS TO LIVE IN JOY

There are also completely different opportunities of joy which are experienced in the simplicity of daily life. Both young and old find joy

in the contemplation of nature. Nature surrounds us with its beauty, freshness, and fruitfulness. It invites us to rejoice in the passing of the seasons. Autumn clothes the mountains with splendid colours and brings with it the fruits of the harvest. Winter comes upon us with snowflakes that dance as they fall, and this snow covers the evergreens and the barren trees with its sparkling cloak. In the spring, it's the joy of the snowdrop that heralds the end of winter, the buds that burst into blossom, the flowering apple trees, life that is reborn. Then summer arrives with its long sunny days, and its magnificent sunrises and sunsets. The whole abundance of nature in full effervescence comes to life.

Moments of joy are lived in the simplicity of relationships. The smile of a child awakes in us the joy of innocence and transparency. The dreams for the future of a young couple lead to a joy full of hope.

The family assembled around a well laden table celebrates the joy of important events: weddings, baptisms, birthdays and anniversaries of all sorts, as well as the humble meals of everyday life. The joy of a discovery, of a successful work project, of expressed creativity, of recovered health, the joy of anticipation: life has been given to us and we are called to bring joy upon earth.

More than an emotion, more than a feeling, joy is a flame that rises from the inside, from the deepest part of our being to illuminate our face and reveal the Love that lives within us. 🌸



SECOND PART

A LITTLE BIT OF SCIENCE TO UNDERSTAND THE CHOICE OF LIVING IN JOY

Joy, just like sadness, is an emotion that can arise spontaneously in one's whole being just as it can be developed by choice. In adulthood, joy does not depend on others, but on oneself.

In the human brain, a group of neurons plays the particular role of triggering reactions. Under the particular influence of the hormone dopamine, the pleasure mechanism is activated. Learning motivates repetition. Joy follows the same neurological current as pleasure. A person who has been desensitized or wounded in his emotional life may seek pleasure that is empty of human meaning, and may also become dependent on experiences of joy dissociated from the essential values of love. The functioning of the neurotransmitter system is strongly tied to the sensibility and the emotional experience of an individual; it is up to the individual to ensure his emotional well-being in order to live in joy.



JOY IS A SOURCE OF HEALTH

The expression “to do something to your heart’s content” may be a dehumanizing joy, a false joy or the expression of a human accomplishment. Since the same region of the brain is touched by pleasure, sadness, and joy that is well or badly adjusted to love, it’s a person’s sensibility and emotional choice that determine whether the sentiment of joy is inhibited or developed.

Human beings in good mental health manage to modify the activity of serotonin. They don’t remain in states of superficial joy or in endless sadness. One characteristic of the adult is to be able to choose health and to foster it. Joy is a source of health, and we are invited to produce it in the balance of everyday living. 



THIRD PART

STORY

THE REAL LIFE STORY OF A 36 YEAR OLD MAN

All it takes is to disengage the cerebral circuits that bring sadness for joy to rise to the surface.

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Clinical sexologist,

Certified EMDR practitioner,

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(In French and Spanish)

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Here is the real life story of a thirty-six year old man I will call Jules.

Jules got up one morning, hung over after the party the night before. Like always, he had breakfast. With the radio on, he had become used to hearing the pattern of rock music and commercials. As he ate his toast, he wondered what in the world he was doing on earth. He no longer felt like continuing with the routine he called a “boring drudge”. He called in sick so he wouldn’t have to go in to work.

Not knowing what to do with his time, he called up a friend to tell him how down he was feeling. The conversation didn’t last long since Jules had often told the same story before.

I CAN LIVE IN JOY

Oh yeah? So why are you always like this? Jules answered, *It’s my so-called life.*

And the friend then became a real friend. *Look, Jules, you either continue with your ‘so-called life’, or you use your body and your mind to become a man.*

After a short silence, Jules got upset and said, *You don’t know what I’m going through.*

The answer wasn’t long in coming. *Listen, life is the same for everybody. There are tough days and easy days; everything depends on what you do with what you are. Go for a walk in the woods and listen to what the trees are telling you: they’re your best friends.*

After a short good-bye, the call was suddenly over. Faced with such lack of sympathy from his friend, Jules did what his friend had advised him to do. He set off with three bottles of water, some apples and nuts in his knapsack and spent the day in some woods he didn’t know, not far from where he lived. He walked along, looking at the trees and wondering how they could possibly speak to him. After two hours of walking, he breathed in deeply, looked at the horizon, and let his arms swing loosely; his pace became more agile, his body straight and vibrant with joy. Within him, a reality had become clear, “I am a man; I can live in joy.” During this “sick day”, he put his neurotransmitters into action, and instead of letting the cerebral circuits clog up with sadness, he used the same biophysical structures to create in himself a state of joy that gave flavour to life. That day, thanks to his friend, he learned something essential about life, and not just survival, on earth.

And thus Jules disengaged the circuits of his brain that bring sadness in order to bring joy to the fore. 🍷



Founded in 1902, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception number nearly 700 members from 17 nationalities working in 13 countries. In their service to the Church, the sisters and their lay associates (ASMIC) work in many capacities: promotion of women, education, health care, parish and diocesan pastoral assistance, social services, etc.

Their Foundress, Délia Tétreault, has marked her time and left an imprint from which pathways have been drawn. Her vision was broad and far-reaching. Her influence contributed to the marvellous development of the missionary awakening in Canada. A mystic and a woman of action imbued of a Spirit of Thanksgiving, her apostolic perspective went beyond all boundaries and cultures.

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Women Without Frontiers

The History of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception 1902-2007

We are pleased to announce that a book of the MIC History is in its final stage. Our objective? A witnessing to the missionary life of the Institute in a well documented, fully illustrated work, which is also easily comprehensible.

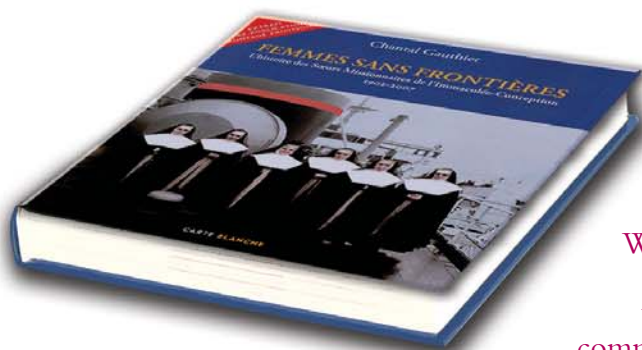
To speak about the MIC Sisters is to recall their life in mission and their accomplishments in the service of evangelization in the fields of education, health care, social work. More than 1500 MICs have been involved and joined forces in 16 countries located on four continents.

Women Without Frontiers offers us an opportunity to share with you what we have achieved throughout the years since our foundation.

Telling our story is a way of expressing our gratitude and paying homage to all those who have supported us from 1902 to this very day.

February 4, 2008, a memorable date: the birthday of our Foundress, Venerable Délia Tétreault and the official launch of this new historical book.

This ambitious project, has required important financial investments from the Community who entrusted the research and drafting to specialized historians. Since the volume is being published by its author, we must find the necessary funds for printing and circulation. To alleviate the costs, we are launching a vast financial campaign and call upon generous hearts to contribute to the production of this book which will contain enlightening historical and missionary facts.



If you are interested in helping us, please send your donation to:

Women Without Frontiers

Mission Procure
121 Maplewood Avenue
Montreal, Qc
Canada H2V 2M2

We sincerely thank you for your interest in our mission work, your generous support, and for communicating this news to others.

For more information, visit our Web site at www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca or contact Sr. Mireille Morin at 514-273-2588 or m.morinmic@sympatico.ca

Where Desire Meets Action, Joy Shines Forth

It is May 2006. At Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau Airport in Montreal, Canada, four young women are about to fulfill their dream. Elaine, Annik, Anne and Stephanie are leaving for Bolivia after a year of missionary formation. In partnership with the MIC Sisters, they are about to achieve their goal.

By France Royer-Martel, M.I.C.

Working in Partnership

These young adults carried out their missionary commitment in partnership with the MIC Sisters. They offered their service to a foundation called *Amenecer*. It is located in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and was created by the Daughters of Charity, better known as the Vicentinas, whose founder is St. Vincent-de-Paul. There are 14 centres where religious and lay people from all cultures welcome young people who are searching

We sense that there is
a treasure deep within us.



for meaning in their life. A program with a variety of themes is offered to them.

Children and adolescents who come to *Amenecer* are victims of drug and alcohol use. Like many other youths around the world, they end up on the market place at a very early age. They are the ones suffer-

ing from neglect, abandoned on city streets, or whose families know nothing but violence. These young adolescents without a home gladly accept a daily glass of milk and a shelter for the night. The staff of the centres also help them find jobs; once employed their guardians stay by their side, continuing to motivate them and encourage them to keep up the good work, their only means of earning a living. A corrupted adult world affects these youngsters. Moreover, the gap between rich and poor continues to widen.

Integration at Solomon Klein

With our partners in mission, we now take a look at the children age 0 to 5 living at *Solomon Klein's Orphanage*, a centre sponsored by *Amenecer*. Some characteristics are common to the children: they are generally introverted, they speak little; at times we could even think they are speechless. Their language is limited, therefore good communication is hampered. They lack discipline and motivation. On the other

Little Daisy — Photo credit: Anne Morais

hand, these little ones exhibit a thirst for affection: they search for open arms. A small loving gesture toward a child will trigger profound joy; unending smiles are the signs of appreciation. Since the number of staff is limited and the individuals working at the orphanage are inadequately trained, they cannot respond to all the demands.

Special Kinds of Joy

After their experience, Elaine, Annik, Anne and Stephanie brought back sunshine in their luggage. They especially keep in mind two cases that touched their hearts: one concerning Daisy, and the other the adoption of a baby. What was so special about Daisy? The expression of joy on this child's face when she was gently approached, cared for and loved. One of the travellers explains: *From time to time Daisy waited for me to sit down and then she would come near me.* The photo (opposite page) reveals the child's longing. As for the adoption of a baby, Elaine states: *I witnessed the adoption of a 9 or 10 month old baby by a couple whose wish it was to have a child. The new parents came from Switzerland and had to stay in Cochabamba for six weeks because of formalities but also to give time to the baby to get used to the new parents. I was astonished to see how quickly the bonding of love and trust developed between the child and the parents. It's an incredible story of love!*

Fruits from our Commitment on Bolivian Soil

The apostolic travellers relate the outcome of their experience as follows: *The first fruit received is the capacity to surpass oneself, the feeling of being useful and helpful to someone. When we approached the fragile children, we mirrored our love for the little ones. Secondly, we learned to be touched physically and emotionally. The four of us have come back changed, different from what we were before. We sense that there is a treasure deep within us. The commitment of the local people, in their service to others, awakened hope in us; we discovered a new and important value: that of human dignity.*

Another fruit in our basket: an intense experience, a unique opportunity to discover oneself and explore other pathways. Our relationships with other human beings have become more complete and important to us; we are making headway on the road of humanity. During our apostolic journey abroad, teamwork and community living offered us golden opportunities to discover ourselves and others around us. It was demanding but also very enriching. As we got acquainted with the local people, shared their daily chores in all simplicity, and gave ourselves space to be questioned and preoccupied by their needs, our existence was interwoven through solidarity with the lives of the Bolivian people, the Vicentinas Sisters and the MICs, but most of all with the children.

Much More to Say...

Back home since June 2006, with a spark in their eyes and a smile on their face, Elaine, Annik, Anne and Stephanie radiate the joy of living. With enthusiasm and hearts overflowing with tender memories they say: *We would have so much more to say about this great experience. But we will add just one more thing: this journey has given us an opportunity to reflect on the way we live in our country. We want to continue growing in our commitment to stand for the little ones and work for the well-being of others. We want to remain in the field of action, for our stay in Bolivia has given us wings.* ☺

At the airport,
ready to fly to Bolivia
Centre-2nd row:
Patsy Morency, M.I.C.
project organizer
Photo credit: MIC



A Breakthrough in Faith

Her parents are from Canton and Sun Wui, China. They are both staunch traditional Buddhists and have a prosperous life under the Ch'ing Dynasty. At the end of that era, they move to Hong Kong and raise a family of six children. Their first born is a premature baby named Ka-Lok (goodness).

By Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.



DURING her childhood years, Ka-Lok learns about her ancestors. At home, there is an ancestral shrine where the family worships and offers incense to the deceased. With her family, Ka-Lok visits the Buddhist temples regularly and she learns about the teachings of the Buddha. Dharma as it is called teaches that all suffering arises from attachment, particularly those that are from worldly desires.

The parents have a dream for their eldest child: that she be well educated and taught in the English language. They enroll Ka-Lok at St. Mary's Catholic School under the direction of the Canossian Sisters. In this milieu she hears about God and in her young mind she tries to make connections. She describes it as follows: *When my teachers would speak about the One God, I gradually would come to understand that Buddha with all my ancestors are the saints of God.*

GOD'S CALLING IS HEARD

As years unfold, Ka-Lok's heart becomes attentive to God's calling. She wants to be baptized and welcomed into the family of God. She relates: *For a long time, my wish to be baptized is kept a secret until a friend of mine discloses it to my parents. Shocked, perplexed, deeply hurt, they cannot understand my thinking, my choice, my decision. Nevertheless, at age 16, I pursue my plan without their consent. On Christmas Eve 1948, at the Holy Rosary Church in Hong-Kong, a Catholic teacher stands by me, wit-*

nessing my Baptism. My patron saint's name would be Magdalena in honour of Magdalen Canossa, Foundress of the Canossian Religious Community.

As a young neophyte, Magdalena continues her education under the guidance of the Canossian Sisters. Inspired by their good examples, she once again hears God's calling: to follow Him in the narrow path. Though active in school projects, she cannot shun the inner voice. Wisely, she consults her spiritual director whose advice comes as a surprise: *Since you are the eldest of six children, you have a duty toward your family, they need your help, therefore, you must wait and be a support to them.*

Your home, here, will
always be your home.



A CONTACT WITH THE MICs

As a qualified teacher, Magdalena teaches in schools run by the Canossian Sisters. She is also a member of the Legion of Mary, an apostolic organization of lay people in the Catholic Church whose members endorse a balanced program of prayer and service, reaching out to those in need. Magdalena is assigned to introduce this organization to the teachers and students of Good Hope School. This is where she meets, for the first time, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

This Marian Missionary Community whose motto is "May the Immaculate Virgin Be Known from Pole to Pole" leaves Magdalena with a desire to know more about this religious missionary group. Her calling to follow Jesus on the narrow path keeps persisting; in 1958 she decides to leave all and become an aspirant in this Marian Community. She once again has to inform her parents of this decision. Upon hearing that I want to become a religious, my father's reply is sincere and soothing: 'I trust your decision. Remember your home, here, will always be your home. I hope you will not leave Hong-Kong.'

A NAME WELL CHOSEN

But Magdalena does leave Hong-Kong; she is sent to the Philippines for her religious training at the novitiate. However, upon entering the MIC Community she hangs-on to a motto that is life-giving: *Yes, Father, I want to do Your Will.* For six years there are no phone calls, no family visits. In 1962 upon taking her first vows, Magdalena has to choose a religious name. This time she thinks of her mother and father; in her heart she wishes they would also come to believe in the One True God. With this in mind, she is inspired to call upon Mary and Joseph to be their guide; she explains: *For the salvation of all my family members, I take the name of Maria for my mother and Joseph for my father.*

In 1973, Sr. Maria-Joseph's wish comes true. Her dying father asks to be baptized and seven years later, her ailing mother is also received into God's family as a baptized Catholic. *The Lord is so good!* exclaims Sr. Maria-Joseph (whose civil name is now Sr. Magdalena Leung).

Throughout her missionary years, Sr. Magdalena has realized that with God all is possible. Whether in Hong-Kong, in San Francisco, in Vancouver, in Montreal, wherever the Lord leads her, she is convinced that the One God she has come to know, love and trust is at work in the heart of her people. Apart from teaching French and English to the day care personnel at the Chinese Catholic Mission in Montreal, she now joyfully treads the streets to meet young and old alike, sharing with them the spiritual insights that dwell within her heart. Her prayer is an expression of her deepest aspirations:

*Father, I live in Your Mercy
may I have Peace.
Though limited, You Love me as I am.
With gratitude and joy, I pray for Peace.
I live day by day, moment by moment.
May Your Will be done.*

¹ Buddha, Lantau, Monastery of Po Lin, Hong Kong

² Sr. Magdalena with her mother

³ The aspirant's last photo before entering religious life

⁴ Leung Kwong-Yau and Yu Yee Kam, father and mother of Sr. Magdalena



Letters from here and abroad

Ancud, Chile – Fifteen young students wishing to form a group called YASMIC (Young Associates to the MICs) are welcomed by the community. Assisting them is a lay missionary, Rosario Lujan, a Bolivian Associate. With deep joy and hope they express the motivations that move them to be of service to the mission. Sisters Manuela Velasquez, Monique Larouche and Irene Romero share with the youth the Spirituality of Thanksgiving which has inspired them to hear the call of the Lord.

After three months in Ancud, I am happy to speak about my missionary experience:

I dreamt to be a servant of Jesus though I was uncertain of the call; now that I have lived with these simple people who welcomed me from the moment of my arrival, I feel truly called to live here. Jesus lives in me and blessed me with gifts. The most important is my capacity to love gratuitously the young people I teach and the elderly I help occasionally. The second gift is that of forgiveness; besides the good and greatness of the mission, there is the living aspect of interculturality. This is a challenge that helps me to grow spiritually and to accept my personal limitations. The Lord called me to be His servant and has blessed me with invaluable moments.

With the joy of giving,
Rosario



Rosario Lujan (1st left)
with members of the Ancud fraternity
Photo credit: MIC



Adrienne Guay (1st right) with the youth
Photo credit: MIC

Warm greetings to all!

In Quebec City, the young people involved in the Youth Summit are preparing themselves for the 2008 International Eucharistic Congress. Six hundred and fifty young people and their leaders from every corner of Canada were gathered with MIC Sisters to share and reflect. The theme, "HERE I AM", was presented through words, songs and theatre, helping us to deepen our life of faith – that faith handed down to us by our ancestors. With a simple and tangible representation of the mystery of the Trinity, THEAMO, a theatre troop whose name means *I love you*, charmed and enlightened us. We were invited to consider our dream, our passion, so as to discern our mission and commit ourselves to it. Those four intensive days brought us closer to God.

We had many activities: visits to the sugar shack, visits to historical sites linked to the founders and foundresses of our Canadian Church, catechesis, liturgical ceremonies, and reflections on the great theme of the Ark of the New Covenant that is travelling through Canada in preparation for the Congress. All this helped us to move from a *HERE I AM* position in the Church to a *I AM HERE* commitment. We are called to become Pilgrims with the Ark of the New Covenant, following our pioneers' footsteps. Stirred by the weekend, we are now advancing enthusiastically toward the great Eucharistic Congress. And every day, more and more, we become sowers of the Gospel.

Adrienne Guay, M.I.C.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

DISCOVERING NEW HORIZONS

May the Spirit

dwell in you

and give you

a heart as vast

as the world,

ever joyful

..... in hope!

May He

inspire you

to bring the light

of Christ to

the world with

the apostles'

eagerness!



CLAIRE DESROCHERS, M.I.C. originally from Saint-Charles-de-Mandeville, Quebec, worked many years in Peru and Bolivia. With joy, she is returning to Lima, Peru, where she will give a helping-hand in community services.

Photo: 1st row: Sr. Claire (center) with the personnel at the MIC Novitiate, Lima



JOSEPHINE RALLOS, M.I.C. from Carcar, Cebu City, Philippines, left for a new mission in Cuba. After a period of adaptation and study of the Spanish language, Sister will be serving in the pastoral-social field.

Photo: Sr. Josephine (left) with her beloved uncle and aunt



PAULINE BRODEUR, M.I.C. originally from Saint-Theodosie, Quebec, worked many years in Africa. Returning to Malawi, she will be involved in the new formation program designed for the MIC postulants.

Photo: Sr. Pauline (right) with Sr. Emeldah Katongo, M.I.C.



ELMIRE ALLARY, M.I.C. of Sainte-Melanie, Quebec, a missionary in Chile, Peru, Bolivia, returned to Peru lately. Her commitment, in the region of the Andes, is in parish ministry and pastoral catechetics.

Photo: Sr. Elmire at the I.E.R. (Institute of Rural Education), Bolivia, with students, future veterinarian auxiliaries.

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Dawn of a New Life



Madeleine Delorme, M.I.C.
(Sister Saint-Omer)
1925-2006
Woonsocket, R.I., U.S.A.

At an early age, Sr. Madeleine hears about the fate of the lepers and wants to be a missionary.

She enters the MIC Community and is sent to the Philippines where she has the direction of a high-school in Manila. Her ecumenical heart and broad-mindedness lead her to take part in various protestant activities; she helps drug addicts, alcoholics, and does secretarial work.

A perfect bilingual, Sr. Madeleine is often requested to do translation, correspondence and also accounting. Vancouver, Belgium, Hong-Kong, Malawi, San Francisco benefit of her talents and resources.

A life well-fulfilled, her missionary heart allowed her to give with love where the Lord called her.



Rita Pageau, M.I.C.
(Sister Jean-Louis)
1923-2006
Montreal, Quebec

Sensitive to those living in poverty, Sr. Rita becomes a missionary to be of help.

A half-century in Haiti, she devotes herself in the field of education and teaching mathematics. She initiates a training school to help non-qualified teachers reach their goal and endorses their success and promotion.

Discreet about her personal life, Sr. Rita silently endures her hard-of-hearing impairment. Her profound trust in Mary imbues her apostolic work.

*Partings here
on earth are a
promise of
meeting again
for all eternity.*

Délia Tétreault

ACPC-inter PRIZE 2006

In November 2006, 'l'Association Canadienne des Périodiques Catholiques' (Canadian Association of Catholic Periodicals) had their annual meeting. Our magazine *Le Précurseur* French version of *MIC Mission News*, received an award for the October-November-December 2005 issue.



IN THE CATEGORY: *RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY MAGAZINES AND MISSIONARY MAGAZINES*

The jury greatly appreciated the overall presentation of the Fall issue. Particular attention was given to the written texts and illustrations. The 'In Focus' – Art and Spirituality was originally depicted and attractive. The footnotes in the margins and at the bottom of the pages were particularly well done. The writing style and quality of language were equally pointed out.

It is in these terms that the winning prize was awarded.

The current direction of the magazine offers its sincere congratulations to the former editorial team, recipients of the award, namely: Paulette Gagné, M.I.C., Directress; Marie-Ève Homier, Editor in chief; Carole Guévin, Administrative assistant; and Sophie Caron, Graphic artist.

A cordial thank you to the members of the jury, Mr. Jacques Désaulniers, Mrs. Stella Montreuil, Mr. Gilles Leblanc and to all of you, our readers, for your most appreciated support.

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C., Directress

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*Happiness does not carry a tag
That shows the price or the size;
It isn't something you can't afford
Or something that's just for the wise.*

*It may be in the face of a child
As he whispers a secret to you
Of the wonderful world that's his to explore
And the new things he's learning to do.*

*Or stop to consider the flowers that grow
With beauty that's calm and serene,
Or the setting of the evening sun
And the moon with its golden beam.*

*It may be some magic no one sees but you,
Or the tune and the lilt of a song,
A cheerful smile from one who is dear
And ties of true friendship held strong.*

J. C.