

MIC MISSION NEWS

SINCE 1923

VOL. 34, N° 3 | JULY ▪ AUGUST ▪ SEPTEMBER 2007 | \$3.00

MIC PUBLICATIONS

Happy to present our

500th issue French edition*
Le Précurseur

490th issue English edition*
MIC Mission News

ECOTOURISM

An Awakening of Consciousness



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

July 2007

For all Christians:

*Conscious of their missionary duty,
may they actively help those involved
in the evangelization of peoples.*

August 2007

For the Church in China:

*May it be a witness to an always
greater internal cohesion and show
effective and visible communion
with the Successor of Peter.*

September 2007

For all missionary men and women:

*In following Christ joyfully, may they
know how to overcome the difficulties
they meet in their everyday lives.*

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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MIC Mission News

Mission magazine published
by the Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception

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Tax Receipt

Registration Number:

NE 89346 9585 RR0001

Presse missionnaire MIC

Legal Deposits

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

National Library of Canada

ISSN 0315-9655

Subscription rates (4 issues)

Single issues: \$3 (plus mailing costs)

1 year: \$10, 2 years: \$20, 3 years: \$25

USA: 1 year: US\$15

International: 1 year: \$20

Canada

We acknowledge the financial assistance
of the government of Canada through the
Publications Assistance Program (PAP) for
mailing expenses.

Mail-publications convention

Number 0040064029

Registration Number (PAP) 11020

EDITORIAL

THE PROMISED LAND...

The cry of the XXIst century: *Save Planet Earth!* More and more we are awakened to the urgent need of caring for our planet. A vital awakening! We cannot flout the cry; we must act...

After a year of hard work, vacation time is very welcome isn't it? This is an opportunity for many to travel, hike, walk or leisurely change pace.

But... there is a BUT: how will we spend our vacations? Nowadays, we speak of ecology, many words borrow the prefix ECO to underline its importance: *eco-science*, *eco-centre*, *eco-activities*, *eco-tourism*, etc. All referring to a preoccupation with the environment—touting respect for the planet and its inhabitants. Following the example of Moses and the Hebrew people, a new awareness is moving the citizens of planet Earth toward the Promised Land where milk and honey flow. (Ex. 3:8)

Is it an illusion, a new publicity trick, or a deterrent for critics of neoliberalism to lessen its negative effects? As mentioned in many of the articles written in this issue, ecotourism calls forth our responsibility as citizens of the Earth. We need a genuine revolution in our ways of thinking, consuming, recycling... Is it not time to say "STOP" to certain habits we have and that degrade our environment?

It's up to each one of us to consciously respond and act without delay. Let us be committed to restore and respect nature's equilibrium; let us elaborate our own *green plan*... Our ways of acting have repercussions, either we renovate or destroy. The situation is crucial: climate change, melting of glaciers, devastation of forests and riverbanks, etc. **SAVE OUR PLANET EARTH!**—a mission that belongs to all of us. This mission can only be successful if we have the courage to act wisely according to the Spirit of the Creator: *And God saw that it was good.* (Gen 1:10)

This summer, ecotourism also offers us occasions to be aware of people we meet, to be attentive to children's laughter, to be sensitive to young lovers, to appreciate the beauty of nature and capture moments of silence so rare in our lives. This other facet of ecotourism can enrich our lives and fill us with much joy.

This issue invites us to either make a first step or to resolutely continue on with those steps that will lead us to the Promised Land. We will embellish and regenerate our planet if we responsibly take great care in not abusing it in one way or another and then pass on this magnificent heritage to the future generations who, in turn, will be able to savour the milk and honey of...the Promised Land.

Happy vacation time! Hope you enjoy reading the following articles.

Marie-Paul Sanjean, m.i.c.

READERS' CORNER

micmissionnews@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.

Denise Crépeau, Montreal, Qc

With pleasure I read all the articles that appeared in the last issue of your magazine. I congratulate you for the well chosen themes and the beautiful illustrations. May you continue in that line.

Nathalie Croteau, Anjou, Qc

It is Sunday morning, the sky is blue, the sun is shining bright, spring is near, what a JOY!

I just read the three-part article of Sr. Marie-Paul Ross. What a beautiful woman; she explains and summarizes so well that little three-letter word: JOY. I love her statement—*MY CHOICE IS TO LIVE IN JOY—Both young and old find joy in the contemplation of nature...* This is what Claude and I wish to pass-on to our children.

Joy is our best ally against moments that are more or less easy to live in a lifetime. Joy is gratuitously given to us, it cannot be bought. Therefore, it is up to us to pass it on, from day to day, in good times as well as in more difficult times.



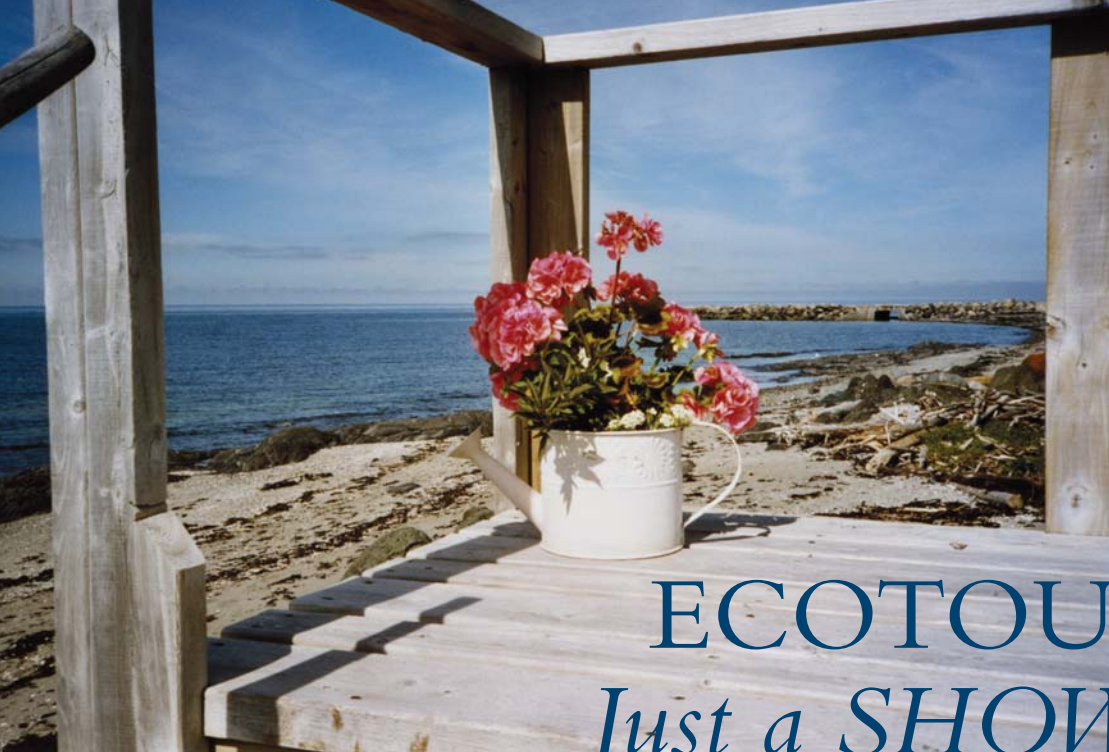


Photo credit: M. Turcotte

ECOTOURISM— *Just a SHOWCASE?*

After playing ‘bulldozer’, is mass tourism implementing a new vocabulary to lessen the perverted effects it has engendered?

The French priest, Father Pierre, tells us a story in his book ‘Carnets intimes inédits’ (P.166); it mirrors back to us a fact-of-life.

By André Gadbois



A businessman goes to India for his vacation. On the shore, he sees a fisherman returning with a fish. Admiring the catch, he says: *What a joy this is! You will go back to the ocean for more? I will come along, you must explain to me how you fish.* — Go back for more... what for? asks the fisherman. *So that you may catch more fish,* says the businessman. — But what for? replies the fisherman once again. *Well, after you’ve sold your catch, you will have money.* — But what for? *You could then buy yourself a boat.* — But what for? *With a bigger boat you could haul in more fish.* — But what for? *Well, you could hire workers.* — But what for? answers the fisherman. *These people would work for you.* — But what for? *Then you would be rich.* — But what for? *You would be able to go and rest.* The fisherman replies: This is what I am doing right now.

At that point, Father Pierre stops his story; but here, unbeknownst to him I will continue.

A clever businessman finds another fisherman. The latter is famished. The businessman buys him a small boat, transforms his little paradise into a major tourist site, sells sunshine in abundance but never allows his *little fisherman* to have enough finances to buy himself a bit of sunshine in Nice, Tuscany, Corsica or a bit of autumn in Lanaudiere, Vermont or even some winter in Quebec.

Money has the power to transform and to destroy, the power to seduce and to blind our eyes, deafen our ears. It has the power to bring comfort for some... and misery for others. Very often money damages conditions instead of improving them, it can crush rather than create harmony. Why is it that the eyes of the clever businessman opened wide before the golden eggs of the fish, while the fisherman remained steadfast on welcoming the present moment?... Mystery! But equity is not so: the little fisherman has just as much dignity and deserves as much respect as the businessman.

A NEW VOCABULARY

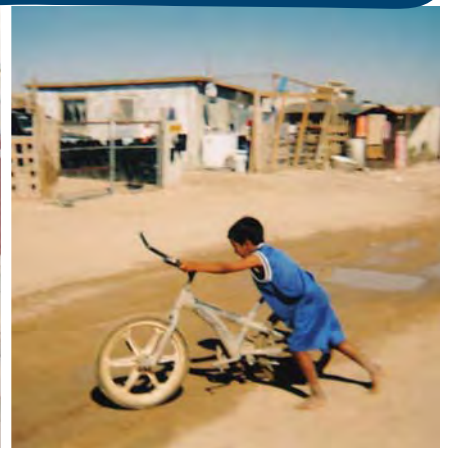
Money flowing from tourism has ‘bull-dozed’ and poisoned our planet Earth. It has scorned local populations, has been so defiant of public opinion and infringed upon environmental laws, to such an extent that businessmen now dare to speak about *RESPONSIBLE TOURISM* and *ECO-TOURISM* so as to reduce the perverse effects of mass tourism.

Are we in the process of inventing a new vocabulary only superficially related to the truth and yet which people are now willing to hear? Such promotional terms as “responsible corporate citizenship and “sustainable tourism” polish the image of those agencies who recognize that, in the name of money and on the altar of abundance, they have sacrificed human beings and destroyed their natural habitat. Michel Lemay, vice president of public affairs for a tourist agency states: *We speak of the environment because tourism can have negative impacts on the natural surroundings; but there is also the social aspect. Tourism often contributes to cultural levelling and now we are realizing the need to preserve cultural diversity, folklore and authentic craft industries. We also have to consider the question of equality for local populations. Do they benefit from the money tourists are spending in the communities?* (La Presse, April 11, 2007, Cahier Actuel, P.4) Who will cover the costs of repairing this mess? Who will install functioning wastewater treatment systems for large tourist sites? When will employees from local communities be offered decent wages? Who will inform the clients (tourists) that they are not at home?

CHRISTIANS, STAND UP!

In His image, God created man and woman. He also created nations and revealed to Moses that none should keep the other enslaved. His Son, by His Word, His actions and death taught us that we are all brothers and sisters with multiple talents (fishermen, businessmen, cooks, tourist guides, chambermaids...) and that truth sets us free. This Son also taught us to pray, not for sunshine during our vacation but for justice and love on our threatened planet: that those who have bread may share it; that forgiveness and reconciliation nourish hope and that the Father’s beautiful creation be well managed. He went to His death criticized for being a disturbing prophet; however, those who believed in Him, though disappointed and full of hesitations, recognized Him ALIVE.

Truth is not a promotional showcase. ∞



The recognition of His presence goes on to this day. We bear witness to His resurrection when we choose to act responsibly without shirking our duty. We do this also when the Truth means more to us than just a promotional showcase: when it becomes our guide for daily living. A guide for work, love and friendship; a guide for politics, education and leisure time; a guide for our relationship with neighbours, for the practice of our faith and even... for the choice of our holiday destination. ∞



Remembering FACES

Interesting, disconcerting, challenging, a text or rather a personal testimony that goes beyond explanation. With heartfelt words, Pierre-René tells us about the multiple encounters that profoundly touched him during his many travels around the world; he recalls the numerous facial expressions that have left their mark.

By Pierre-René Côté

Facial expressions —here, there, everywhere!

Everywhere, faces! One face stands out! A powerful, intimate, secret moment. A moment of intensity, thick with encounter, imprinted in my memory like a spurt of growth as a human being. Those moments of encounter have taught me, shaped me. “Remembering Faces” challenged me to admit and acknowledge to what extent I am who I am because of the hundreds of faces of people who, without knowing it, with no educational strategy whatsoever, have had an impact on my training, on the “BUILDING” of whom I have become. More than anything, I have learned that, sometimes, mere instances can last through time.

“All aboard! On our way!”

There is no other way for me to begin the journey than to tell you about some of the faces that have impressed me along my journeys. They are my faces and my stories: for you, the reader, they are unfamiliar and strange. Nevertheless, the part of me that has never expressed itself even after my

trips to Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, France and Spain or even while in Montmagny and Drummondville, this hidden aspect of me will now make itself known.

“Last stop—all passengers disembark!”

Yes, hasten the pace, and I hope you will take the time to wind back, so as to remember those trips you have taken and those faces that impressed you along the way. Though I will tell you about my experiences, do let your memory flash back to those words, and facial expressions that still speak to you today even though they might seem like they are buried away in some old photo albums. One day, when I was visiting an orphanage in Bolivia, a child less than two years old stretched out his arms with pleading eyes. I did not want to pick him up but then I could not resist. As I was about to put him down on the floor, our tears blended. Once again, I had to convince myself that he would never be my son and that I would never be his father. Those facial expressions, smiling or sad, welcoming or mean, perhaps even indiffe-

rent, but nonetheless wounded by some dramatic event....all these faces have one common feature.

What is this feature? They have become a part of you. Somehow, they have touched you and so you are no longer the same, unknowingly you have changed. Through my 'exposé' I hope to break down the walls of silence, of unconsciousness, or perhaps of forgetfulness to bring back to light the intimate and secret encounters which continue to linger within you notwithstanding time and distance.

You have just embarked on my train, but now go on to your own destinations. See and hear once again those facial expressions that have touched you deeply and have transformed your being and your history. Be attentive to these 'productive distractions' and respect them.



The whole world belongs to you

Geographically moving about, my trips brought me back to a childhood experience. A mental snapshot of Joe Bégin flashed in my memory. He was our family's neighbour and when I was four or five years of age, he took me to a mountain.

From its peak, on a clear day in May, we could see the State of Maine, its green mountains, and beyond Quebec to the Laurentians. Joe helped me contemplate the vastness and beauty of nature. I was in awe before the lush green landscape.

Sensing my reaction, Joe Bégin looked at me and said: "There you are my boy! From where you stand, the whole world belongs to you." That moment and that statement were engraved in my heart for always. Joe had taught me that I was a 'citizen of the world' and that all of planet Earth was my own. Today, as an adult, I believe our family neighbour wanted to bless me with a gift—that of discovering something beautiful—and share with me his contemplative outlook. Joe Bégin did not give me the world, but he invested me as heir of the earth, making me an active participant in my own time and in my own way, like so many other citizens of the earth who in the past took on that privilege.

Though I kept it a secret for years, truly I now say that Joe Bégin's statement followed me everywhere I travelled to: on the height of Mount Sinai, with people at the heart of Jerusalem, at Mont Blanc in the Alps, on the boat crossing the North Sea while contemplating the wind turbines planted deep in the ocean, from the top of a mountain gazing down at the city of Port-au-Prince in Haiti, while navigating on a stormy sea along the seacoast of Ireland...

Beyond one's self

We all have travelled. At one point in our lifetime we all walked away from home, from our familiar surroundings, to enter into someone else's world. You and I can come across millions of people without ever meeting them—such as in airports. We walk right by a variety of stories: romantic, tragic, crazy, each one different from the other, and without even taking notice we go our own way. Preoccupied by our personal agendas, we move around as in a shell. Whether in Dorval, Amsterdam, Brussels or Mexico, we hasten to be in control of our schedule, our luggage, ourselves. We don't see the many faces that

About the Author

Pierre-René Côté, priest
—is associate professor at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Science at Laval University in Quebec City. He is a collaborator for Agapê, a Centre for Christian training.

About the Artist

Léonard Parent, known as « BASQUE » was born in Trois-Pistoles, Qc. Painting since 1948 and inspired by nature, BASQUE paints people and things with emotion and mystery. The paintings of this leading figure reflect the soul and image of his country.

To know more

Basque Gallery, Rimouski
Au P'tit Bonheur, La Malbaie
<http://www.aupetitbonheur.com/>

Photos

- ¹ Here I am
- ² Facial expression
- ³ Companionship
- ⁴ Child of light

cross our path. They don't leave an impression unless we come to grips with our selves and, in an instant, become conscious of our humanity above and beyond our status as 'traveller'.

Finding the "other", divesting one's self

Leaving behind my world, my power to control, and finding myself elsewhere: only then can I begin re-learning how to live—it's like a re-birth. It's rediscovering the simple things of life: how to go from one place to another, how to find shelter, how to speak, eat, dress, how to contact people. With my new outlook on life I re-evaluate my former ways of being and living: the world I came from, the advantages I had, the economic, cultural, social and political privileges, the superiority complex I carry around though unaware of it but feeling it when I am in the presence of the poor, the humble: victims of our domination.

I was a citizen of the world,
all of planet Earth was my own. 

The strength of the "other" and my limitations

I also measure my limitations, my frailties, my failings, my own inner poverty, different from that of the POOR, but no less real. Encountering the "other", remembering those faces I have kept hidden in my memory, help me become more human among other human beings. I learn to accept a new relationship—that of 'being with' in a covenant relationship; individuals can no longer be strangers.



A new world arises

I learn to set fear aside. I discover that everywhere on earth human beings want to experience wholeness for themselves and for others for whom they are responsible. They want their basic needs to be met: drink, eat, dress, have a shelter, work for a living. They wish to be respected in their dignity and to break away from all forms of evil, suffering, misery, of humiliations.

Stripped from my former world, I discover my oneness with all of humanity on planet Earth.

More so, if I can put names to those faces I have come across in this world, nothing is more absurd and revolting than conflicts and wars. The sacredness of life drives us at all times to acknowledge the sources of conflict, negotiate to find solutions, resolve the problems, and to establish clear and just rules so that life may be served well and flourish. I have become more preoccupied and in-tune with the justice and peace issues to prevent evil rather than resolutions. The latter are often words half-way clothed with injustice, misunderstanding, fear, violence and halfway clothed with hope and courage. 

Le Précurseur—500th issue

The Precursor/ MIC Mission News—490th issue



Celebrating a Bit of History

In 1920, Délia Tétreault—a woman of vision with a glowing heart, had one desire: that God's Love for all humanity be known and spread worldwide. To reach her goal, she inaugurated a mission magazine: *Le Précurseur* and three years later the English edition *The Precursor*. A well-chosen title, reminding us of St. John the Baptist who proclaimed and prepared the coming of the Lord. Though the magazine is now called *MIC Mission News*, it has remained faithful in conveying the Gospel message and is still a link between peoples of different cultures.

We Pay Tribute

This event is an excellent occasion to say "Thank You" to all the people who, from the very beginning, have contributed to spreading the Good News. Our gratitude reaches out to all of you, faithful apostles, who do not fear in giving your time to promote the magazine and recruit new subscribers. The missionary press is a way to witness the Good News and for those who wish, to share the Sacred Fire of the Spirit. For your wholehearted commitment we say "Thank You".

A Wish

Like Venerable Délia Tétreault we wish to make the Mission known by means of our magazine, *MIC Mission News*. Its inspiring articles communicate the Christian values so much needed in our world today; they also present facets of evangelization that carry a message for our times.

As we celebrate the 500th publication of the French edition and the 490th issue of the English version we have a wish: that of gaining **500 new subscribers** from now until the end of the year 2007. To find a new subscriber means promoting the Mission of Jesus who is the source of Peace, Joy and Love.

How about it? Let us join hands and work together to achieve our goal: it is possible. We walk united in the service of the Missionary Church!

The Editorial Team

I find a New Subscriber

Name: _____
 Address: _____ Apt.: _____
 City: _____ Province/Country: _____
 Postal Code: _____ Phone: () _____

❖ **Subscription in Canada:** ☐ 1 year: \$10 ☐ 2 years: \$20 ☐ 3 years: \$25
 ❖ **In the USA:** ☐ 1 year: US\$15 ❖ **Other countries:** ☐ 1 year: \$20

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Spiritual D.N.A.

Nowadays, it is undeniable that DNA is a sure way of finding a person's identity. This molecule containing the specific genetic instructions of each individual is in a certain way, equal to an ID card. In her mission awareness activities Sr. Yolaine Lavoie, an ingenious MIC Sister, explores the idea with Madagascan children. Is there really such a thing as spiritual DNA?



By Yolaine Lavoie, M.I.C.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL DNA?

Often we tell children: *You look so much like your father, or... like your mother; you have the same eyes, the same nose or... the same way of walking!* This is altogether natural since DNA is the genetic molecule passed on from parents to their offspring.

At the heart of each person, there is also a life-eternal seed that is meant to germinate and grow; it will never die. This is the Love of God in us, our spiritual DNA. Not even death can separate us from this kind of DNA because we are created in the image and likeness of God. Thanks to this spiritual DNA, we can acknowledge that all human beings have the same Father. Being of the

same Source we are therefore all brothers and sisters in the great human family.

How to help children capture this truth? The little ones understand very well that when we love one another we resemble our Father. One day, a student told me: *I think that when we really 'feel' God, we have many friends.* Indeed, when we share the same values, the same spirit sets us apart as children of God, and we realize that we are all part of the same family. This is marvellous!

I remember little Mario who one day said: *My mother is like God because she loves me very much.* Theologian in the making, he had discovered in his mother the Love, Gentleness, and Generous Heart of the Father. Is not God's great dream, to see us resemble Him in all our being and doing? Always according to the Word and example of Jesus...

WITNESSING GOD'S TENDERNESS

In one of his exhortations, Pope Benedict XVI said: *Mission-minded children are the witnesses of God's tenderness.*

Missionary Childhood is one section of the Pontifical Missionary Works. Its goal: to instil in the children's hearts a desire to be missionaries, reaching out to children of the world by means of prayers and sharing materially with them. Missionary Childhood supports more than 4,000 projects, benefiting youngsters throughout the world.

Pope Benedict XVI encourages educators to cultivate the missionary spirit in young ones so that they may become passionately involved in reaching out, reflect-

ing God's Love and Tender care. He states: *Children are precious collaborators of the Gospel and apostles of Christian solidarity for young ones in dire need.*

HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

Who could forget the Holy Childhood? When missionaries came to visit our schools and spoke to us about children in faraway countries, our young hearts would respond positively. The world would open up before our eyes, and a calling was heard, that of *children helping children*. In Canada, this Association aroused and encouraged many missionary vocations. Nicole Giguère's documentary "Alice au pays des gros nez" mentions that missionaries' visits in schools sensitized Quebecers to the possibility of adopting Chinese girls.

A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION

The Holy Childhood Association exists in 110 countries. In Madagascar, at the national office of the Pontifical Missionary Works, I can testify as national secretary that Pope Benedict's appeal has not left us unmoved.

CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

This slogan rallies us in our mission awareness activities. A mission-minded child will pray for the children of the world. Around planet Earth a spiritual link is created among young ones. Also, once a month, these children will add their pennies to the Universal Fund—Children's Solidarity for Mission. In developing countries, this Universal Fund enables missionaries to organize projects benefiting children. It is a Catholic, non-government organization; it is funded by children for children.

THE MICs AND THE ASSOCIATION

As in Madagascar, the MIC Sisters in Haiti also foster the missionary spirit in children. Since 1980 they periodically offer them a mission magazine: *Ti Moun Mysionè*. This publication helps students expand their knowledge, taking them beyond their own country and problems; they discover other children from around the world and they are called to also be WITNESSES OF

GOD'S TENDER CARE. Every Saturday, Sr. Rosette Lafortune, M.I.C. hosts a program on 'Radio-Soleil'; she introduces the theme of the magazine, talks about concrete, updated events experienced by the children mentioned in the articles. The stories deeply touch the Haitian youth; as they become more aware of other children's plights, they count their blessings and pray for all the youngsters around the world.

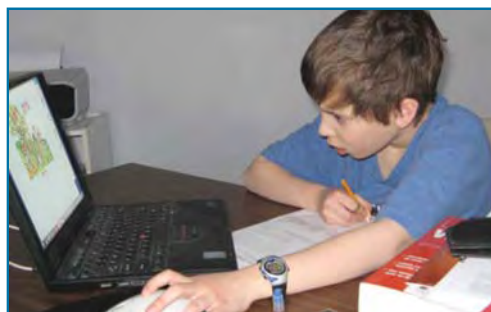
In Canada, THE HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION is the missionary movement through which students develop a love for missions and become acquainted with children around the world. On their website <http://www.missionsocieties.ca/child.htm> a students' corner appears where young people can discover how they can help those who are living in inhumane conditions and extreme poverty.



Magazine *Ti Moun Mysionè*

A mission-minded child is
a child who reaches-out to
children around the world. 

In all the MIC schools, in South America, the Philippines, Japan or Hong Kong, where there are Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Childhood Association is honoured. Many movements and activities are created in a spirit of solidarity so as to develop spiritual DNA: that Love so precious to all of us brothers and sisters of the great universal family of the Father. 



In Canada, the Holy Childhood Association helps students develop a love for missions and become acquainted with children around the world.

<http://www.missionsocieties.ca/child.htm>

THE SECRETS OF AN OLD OAK TREE

As a member of the 4H Club in her home town of Saint Félicien, Quebec, Sister Lise developed a great concern for the health of the planet. During her childhood years, long before the Kyoto Accord, she had started taking action at her own level. As a missionary in Haiti for many years, she was always preoccupied with ecology. From her years of attentive listening to nature, she shares with us today the secrets of the old oak tree...

By Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.

In the 4H Club, we learned about and developed a respect for nature, for all living things. One of our preoccupations was tree conservation. We were made aware of the importance of respecting the environment. Over the years, I remained attentive to nature's call and I cultivated the love of life, and of life in abundance! Nature has always been a place where I can recharge my batteries. But today, what is becoming of our planet? What happens to life when our forests are burned down, and our rivers and lakes, even the beautiful Saint-Lawrence, have become garbage dumps? Our country is rich in fresh water and we use this water without a thought to the future, like any other overexploited natural resource. And yet we know that this treasure is exhaustible. Our solidarity with other peoples has made us aware of the situation of women and children who walk for kilometres to draw their daily reserve of water at the cost of immense effort!

The summer season gives us the chance to get back to nature, to taste the joy of feeling surrounded by life, peace and calm, away from our bustling cities. Let us listen as a witness to our sick planet as she speaks:

— *O great oak tree, so proud and strong, tell us about your life. You seem so solitary.*

— I was planted in the soil of this marvellous planet at the same time as an infinite number of brothers. Our leaves protected the smaller trees from the harsh rays of the sun. The wind, the birds, and the bees all contributed to our reproduction by spreading our pollen. Now that I am the only one of my kind left in this valley, how will I be able to reproduce, to ensure the survival of my family? At the end of our yearly cycle, we fertilized our habitat with our leaves: they enriched the soil that conserved the humidity it needed during the dry spells. Little rodents gathered our acorns in fall to help them make it through the winter.

During my life as a great plant, I saw my fellow oak trees disappear one by one. Man needs us trees and we are proud to help him out. Do you see my leaves? If they don't look young, don't put it down to my age, because I renew them every spring. Harsh winters don't scare me: I may look dead but I live within. I silently get ready to welcome the spring sunshine, and my sap runs anew. I offer myself to Man's service,

and my pride is to know that I'm useful! All my neighbours have succumbed to a sad fate. I needed their company to be able to resist the sun's burning rays. Alone, I can no longer absorb all the carbon dioxide. Acid rain and toxic gases prevent me from keeping my beautiful green leaves, the sign of my vitality.

— *What happened to your friends?*

— It happened many years ago. I found out from those who went before me... Man took what suited him. We felt we were being useful to him to cook his food, build his houses and furniture, and warm himself in the cold season. Then one day, Man came with his powerful machines and he spared nothing, not even the little ones! It seems Man had more important needs... But Man forgot about the future.

— *And how is it that you were spared from the "clear cutting"?*

— As you can see, it's the stream nearby that saved my life. I can tell you quite frankly that people really did try to plant other trees. But we'll have to be patient, because the natural environment where we grow has suffered serious damage. We were injured right down to our roots. And we're not used to the chemical substances we have to absorb. Since the ozone layer was destroyed, the saplings have had trouble surviving to maturity. On top of that, with global warming, insects have come up from the south and invaded the young buds. Insects are useful for our ecosystem: they help to oxygenate the soil, feed the predators and spread pollen from the plants that feed and shelter them. But since the insects from the south have no predators, their over-proliferation has become harmful... *Nothing is perfect!*, as the fox in the *Little Prince* would say.

Long ago, the stream gurgled at my feet and refreshed me... Today, its cool mountain water is quickly warming up. Algae are taking over and the foreign bodies piling up in it are killing off the amphibians and other

aquatic animals: they can no longer get enough oxygen to survive! And that's how I came to be so alone. Luckily, the sound of birds singing still cheers me up; at night, I shelter them. But they also complain: their sometimes melancholic songs express their own difficulty to survive; their feathers have lost their lustre. In spite of everything, they struggle on with their mission to give joy, constantly adapting to all the whims of the changing climate. In their own way, they tell us that life is worth protecting...



Sister Lise at the foot of a 300 year-old oak tree

To say millions of
"I LOVE YOU"
to the earth. ∞

We could keep listening to this great sage for a long time. Today, why not say YES to our planet and commit ourselves uncompromisingly to its survival? It needs us. If during the summer season, every one of earth's citizens did a little something for the environment, millions of I LOVE YOUs would be sent to the earth... Are we not responsible for the vast universe that the Creator so freely gave us? ∞

In certain countries children must draw water everyday.



ECOTOURISM EVERYDAY

Summer is finally here! This beautiful season offers us 'time-out' to relax, to rest, to leisurely enjoy nature in all its splendour.

By Lorraine Pagé



About the author

Lorraine Pagé –

Ex-president of Montreal Teachers' Alliance, Mrs. Pagé was the first woman to sit as president of a Quebec Central Union. Now retired, she presides over the Administrative Board for the MIC Missionary Press.

These past few years, our consciousness has been awakened by the environmental threats that exist around us. Ecotourism is a new concept which attracts numerous followers and which directs programs offered by travel agencies. But what does it mean exactly?

Generally speaking, ecotourism takes into consideration the conservation of biological and cultural diversity. While enjoying and taking in the beauty of nature, ecosystems must be protected, and the welfare of the local population must be respected. But, does one need to leave his or her own surroundings to experience ecotourism?

For many, travelling is a rare circumstance perhaps because of financial reasons or ill health, for others, it's a choice. Either way, all travellers eventually come back home and spend more time in their own environment than touring exotic places.

REINVENTING ECOTOURISM

No need to pack-up a suitcase to experience ecotourism. Every day, every hour,

we can live that reality, and it can take on a multitude of forms: being outdoors and taking advantage of the warm sun, the gentle breeze, the wonderful aroma of blooming flowers; contemplating the moon's silver lining and the starry sky; listening to the falling rain and the high-pitched song of the cicada; taking public transportation to go visit the beauties of nature that surround us and that charm people who come as tourists; tasting our good fruits and vegetables grown locally in abundance; enjoying fresh water and cold ice cream; savouring the simple things of life without over-spending and consuming.

Above all, in the wide open spaces, allow the heart to discover what is most beautiful in one's life: spending time together with loved ones; playing with children and hearing their laughter; sharing some activities with couples and family members; rediscovering each other; visiting aging parents or elderly friends—to be a ray of sunshine in their lives. All of these loving actions are possible and fill the soul with marvelous memories—perhaps less



exotic but no less real. So many ways of benefiting from nature in an environmental perspective while contributing to our well-being and that of others. It is possible to be 'green-friendly' in one's own environment, and renew one's self without having to pack-up and leave.

AT THE HEART OF ECOTOURISM

By preserving nature, the best of our human existence is also protected. Saint Benedict once said: *Listen with the ear of your heart!* To complete his thought one could say: *See and smell with your heart!* This summer, may our senses be opened to the incomparable beauty that surrounds us day and night, to taste and see in the ordinary moments of our existence the blessings that are ours to relish. This is a fabulous invitation to a different way of living ecotourism—that of the heart and everyday in one's own environment. 🌿



Allow the heart
to discover what is
most beautiful
in one's life. 🌿

SOMEWHERE... FOR YOU... A SANCTUARY

If you are taking time to read during these summer days, could it be that, unconsciously, you are searching for a sanctuary? A mini reflection on this subject is offered to you today. When speaking of sanctuary, we often think of “pilgrim” or “pilgrimage”. To begin, my wish for you is that this three-faceted theme may find an echo in your heart.



By Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

WHAT IS A SANCTUARY?
Tradition and experience tell us about **a space** away from other spaces—a definite area, not chosen, but rather discovered by persons who **listen**. A place that contains **a certain something** that is sacred and that only the silent heart can capture and appreciate. Rocks, lakes, streams, mountains, woods, a small church at the end of a path—all these are guardians of that **special sacred space** and are discovered by persons who vibrate in tune with its created and creative energies. Moreover, it's out of this unfathomable silence that earth came forth from the hand of God. And this earth contained a special sacredness because *God walked in the garden with the human beings whom He created in His Image and Resemblance.* (Gen 1:26; 3:8)

Being in touch with the sacred character nature conceals means that in the heart of all human beings there is also a Sacred Space, a Holy of holies indispensable for proper breathing and oxygenating one's self. *Whoever loves Me, my Father will love him, and my Father and I will come to him and live with him.* (Jn 14:23)

This Divine Presence within us is an inscrutable mystery. Yes, our heart is a sacred space where The Faithful Friend, Jesus,

wants to break Bread—the kind of food we long and search for without even knowing it: the bread of tenderness, forgiveness, consolation, understanding, the bread needed to continue walking on the right path. (Lk 24:32; 1Kgs 19:7)

This quest for the Infinite, for the Sacred Space, is probably what urges a great number of men and women thirsting for Silence, Plenitude, Presence and Prayer to take up the pilgrim's staff and go where the Holy Spirit invites them; a pilgrimage is first and foremost a spiritual journey.

AN INCOMPARABLE WEALTH OF SANCTUARIES

We have heard about the Sanctuaries in Europe. Perhaps you have visited some of them: St-Jacques of Compostelle, Lourdes, Saint Peter at the Vatican, Lisieux, Assisi, to name but a few.

The Province of Quebec offers an incomparable wealth of sanctuaries. At the end of the XVIIth century, New France had a few, one of which is the Shrine of St Anne of Beaupré. In the early XXth century, there were at least 26 in Quebec. In 1950 the number grew to 82 and today it continues to increase. *Where are these sanctuaries located?*

Lower Saint Lawrence, Qc: Sanctuary of Saint Anne of La-Pointe-au-Père. **Estrie, Qc:** Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Beauvoir. **Lanaudière, Qc:** Mary Queen of Hearts in Chertsey (Marian Centre). **Mauricie, Qc:** Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Cape. **Montréal, Qc:** Sanctuary of Marguerite d'Youville in Varennes, Sanctuary of Kateri Tekakwitha in Kahnawake, Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in Rigaud, Sanctuary of Saint Anne of Sabrevois. **Montreal, Qc:** Saint Joseph's Oratory, Notre Dame Basilica, Chapel of Notre-Dame-of-Bonsecours, Sanctuary of Réparation-du-Sacré-Coeur, Sanctuary of Mary Queen of Hearts, Sanctuary of Saint Pérégrin. **Quebec City, Qc:** Cathedral-Basilica Our Lady of Quebec, Canadian Montmartre, Sanctuary of Saint Anne of Beaupré. **Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, Qc:** Saint Anthony's Hermitage of Lake Bouchette.

Within your heart, in your sacred space,
dwells the ever abiding Faithful Friend. 

THE FAMILY—A SANCTUARY OF LOVE

At the Fifth World Meeting of Families in Valencia, Spain, (July 8-9, 2006), Pope Benedict XVI mentioned that such a gathering *should provide a new impetus for proclaiming the Gospel of the family as the sanctuary of love, life, and faith.*

In his article, Father Joël-Marie Boudaroua, O.P. states: *It is quite interesting that the Pope, speaking of families, would use the term "sanctuary"... This is a place we come to with reverence, as it holds a mystery in itself: Mystery of God and Mystery of man's heart. In using this word "sanctuary" Pope Benedict XVI wants to draw our attention to the ineffable dignity of the family; he endows it with a sacred character.* (Esprit & Vie, No. 16, Pages 31-32)

MEMORABILIA OF YESTERYEARS

How can I end this article without presenting a very special sanctuary to you. It is a small room where a great woman of our times has lived. Her name is Délia Tétreault, born in Marieville, Qc; she is the foundress of our Institute (1902) and was declared venerable by late Pope John Paul II in December 1997. During our centennial year, in 2002, the Museum of Civilisation in Quebec City presented a magnificent mis-

sionary exhibition. This was a great opportunity for visitors to come into contact with their roots and give thanks for a page of history written by this daring woman of the Canadian Church. A special invitation! Come and visit this SPECIAL SPACE, this sanctuary, as a pilgrim. We would be pleased to welcome you; with a scheduled appointment, you can have a guided tour.

This sanctuary is known as The Délia Tétreault Centre, located at our Mother House: 314 Cote St Catherine Road, Montreal (Quebec), H2V 2B4; Tel: (514) 495-1551.

A WISH

From the special sacred space, we moved on to the sanctuary of the family—that of LOVE. Only an opened heart can turn "within" in order to make contact with the Sacred Presence. To capture the callings from the Divine, it is inwardly that one must go. My wish for you? That you may experience a true pilgrimage within your heart, in your home or in one of those holy areas that lead to the Sacred Space where Joy, Serenity and Love are found. A fountain of youth from which to draw life! 

Letters from here and abroad

KANYANGA, ZAMBIA

Stop Aids, Keep the Promise!

Greetings from Zambia,

A two-day celebration of World AIDS Day was organized by staff members of our Kanyanga Mission Health Centre under the theme: STOP AIDS, KEEP THE PROMISE! Clients on home-based care were given some instructions on topics related to AIDS. Sisters Jeanne d'Arc Corriveau, Virginia Guerrero, Catherine Mkamanga, Wezi Chihana, Ketty Ndhlovu and myself joined the HIV/AIDS clients and their caregivers, the pastors and members of other Churches and people at large in a meaningful ecumenical candle-light scriptural celebration in the church at Emusa. During the prayer service, about 300 persons lighted their candles to signify HOPE for all those affected or infected by HIV/AIDS.

All were invited to remember and pray for those who had passed away. It was a day to be grateful and thankful to the Kanyanga Churches Home Based Care who united to respond to the needs of patients living with HIV/AIDS. Among the many people present, there was Senior Chief Magodi. In his remarks he encouraged people to go to VCT (Voluntary Counselling Testing) day and to discontinue some cultural practices such as polygamy so as to stop AIDS. In Zambia about 16% aged between 15 and 49 are infected according to a Health Survey of 2006.

The two day celebration was indeed a success because of the leadership and enthusiasm of the team from Kanyanga Mission Health Centre, a health institution that has the powerful motto: "In Jesus' Name, be healed!".

*Sr. Jacqueline Vachet, M.I.C.
Directress — Kanyanga Mission Health Centre*



*Sr. Jacqueline at the hospital
Photo credit: MIC*



*Sr. Nancy with pastoral agents
Photo credit: MIC*

TAIWAN

Assisting women in prison

Dear Readers,

My pastoral parish work in Taipei often takes me into the unknown. Today, I want to share with you the outcome of a new project within prison walls.

"CHOICE" a 3-day self-awareness programme that leads one to an encounter with God is given to the women prisoners of the Toyuan County prison. I accepted the invitation to help in facilitating the small group sharing. The 85 participants are all AIDS victims. Some Catholic volunteers come every week to give catechism classes and do the best they can to accompany the women with care and understanding. As I listen to their stories, I am touched by the sufferings they undergo and the reasons that led them to drug addiction.

These women now have a sincere desire to do well and to walk in the right path, but they are aware of their vulnerability once they are released from prison and go out again into the world. Their environment does not give them encouragement, healthy friendships and acceptance which they need so much. Looking for a decent work often poses a big problem and they experience rejection and isolation. For those who come to know God and believe in His love, praying helps them to overcome the difficult times and they find strength and courage to break through and succeed in their goals.

From deep within my heart, I feel a vibrant calling to come to the help of these women; their sincerity and openness move me to compassion and understanding.

*Sr. Nancy Vy So, M.I.C.
Taipei, Taiwan*

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES — Lk 24:48

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!



ANA ALVARADO, M.I.C. — Born in Lima, Peru, Sister Ana returns to Japan after a brief home-leave in her native city. Particularly talented in linguistics: French, English, Japanese, she will resume her work with the immigrants and young Japanese. This responds to her charism — 'to be all for all' with enthusiasm and joy.



JEANNINE FORCIER, M.I.C. — Originally from Springfield, Mass., U.S.A. — Sister Jeannine leaves for Zambia, Africa. Not unknown to her, it is with joy that she is returning to the land of her dream. While she was in Canada, she worked at the General Secretariat of the Congregation, and also offered her pastoral services in assisting the sick Sisters. Her new assignment will be to teach English and the history of our Institute to the young MICs in formation.



YOLAINE LAVOIE, M.I.C. — Sister Yolaine is from Ville-de-la-Baie, Quebec. After a brief home-leave in Canada, she is returning to Madagascar. Very dedicated to the Pontifical Missionary Works, and as secretary of the national team in Tananarive, she will continue focusing her animation on the faith and missionary education of the children.



RITA GUAY, M.I.C. — Born in Montreal, Quebec, Sister Rita has been in Zambia and Malawi for over 40 years. Her apostolate? Promoting the status of women (20 years in Chipata, Zambia), working at the diocesan level for the family movement and the formation of young religious women. She has recently returned to Malawi and will resume her work, while offering to all surrounding religious communities a formation program to religious life.

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Dawn of a New Life



Hélène Hébert, M.I.C.
(Sister Sainte-Hélène)
1911-2007

Notre-Dame-de-Pierreville, Quebec

From her early childhood years, her beautiful black eyes were an attraction. Independent, reserved and orderly,

Hélène loved beauty and goodness. In her heart, she had a dream—to work with the lepers. Faithfully, she read the magazine *Le Précurseur* and finally found her way of life as a missionary. Assigned to work in Malawi and Zambia, Africa, Sr. Hélène worked in dispensaries, relentlessly responding to the needs of the sick and she was also involved in community services.

Upon her return to Quebec, she continued helping families who remained close to her up to the end of her life. Sister's sense of responsibility and apostolic zeal were characteristics of a missionary imbued with God's Love



Marie-Berthe Fleurent, M.I.C.
(Sister Sainte-Émérentienne)
1907-2007

Sainte-Perpétue, Quebec

During her school years, Marie-Berthe enjoyed reading stories about missionaries working abroad; these tales awakened within her heart a desire to serve as a missionary. Having graduated from nursing school, she was assigned to Manchuria, China where she worked in a dispensary.

Wars made life difficult for the missionaries; however, Sister Marie-Berthe was among the last ones to leave China.

She then went to Taiwan where she helped the less fortunate. When she returned to Canada, her apostolic heart kept in touch with all her Chinese friends and immigrants. Her pioneering spirit and faith guided Sr. Marie-Berthe throughout her many years of service and long life.



Marie-Rose Fréchette, M.I.C.
(Sister Marie-Rollande)
1913-2007

Saint-Côme de Beauce, Quebec

Tenth in a family of thirteen, Marie-Rose experienced many hardships during her childhood years: a serious flooding, an epidemic, the death of her beloved father... When her studies were completed, she decided to become a religious; at the age of 22 she entered the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. At first she was assigned to community services in Canada and taught at our school in Outremont. Later, she went to Haiti; with enthusiasm and courage she committed herself to the education of children. When she returned to Canada, Sister Marie-Rose gradually lost her sight and hearing, however she would find ways to radiate sunshine by her prayer life and openness to the Will of God.

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

Délia Tétreault

WOMEN WITHOUT FRONTIERS

HISTORY OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

WITNESSING

June 2007

I owe much to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Still young, not yet six years of age, my parents enrolled me at the Child Jesus Kindergarten in Outremont. Later, the school took on the name of Délia Tétreault in memory of the community's foundress.

I am grateful to my parents who decided to send me to that school where the religious were not only teachers but truly educators. I remember Sr. Marie-Albertine who, at the time, was my first grade teacher. She would speak to us about faraway countries, the mission lands, and her stories made us dream. Decades later, I am still persuaded that Sr. Jacqueline—as she was called thereafter—awakened within me the desire to be, if not a missionary, at least a globe-trotter journalist.

I have remained very close to these religious missionaries; this is the reason why today I urge you to support the MIC Sisters who deserve our response. Founded in 1902, they were the first Congregation of missionary women in North America, and in the '50s they were already established in China, the Philippines, Japan, Haiti, Malawi, Zambia... they were also in Cuba, Madagascar, Taiwan and Bolivia. In fact, they were our first ambassadors of good will. Their humanitarian actions reached far beyond our borders to faraway nations, little known to us on the other side of the ocean.

The time has come for us to offer them a helping hand. The MICs are in the process of publishing a book entitled Women Without Frontiers. It is the story of their early beginnings and accomplishments throughout the years; it also depicts the missionary endeavours of the Canadian Catholic Church. This volume is being published by its author, therefore our moral and financial support would be greatly appreciated.

Our society owes much to the MIC Sisters. Thus, this is a perfect opportunity for us to express our gratitude.

Pierre Nadeau
Journalist



***Your contribution to this project would be greatly appreciated.
You may send your donations to:***

MISSION PROCURE, c/o Women Without Frontiers
121, Maplewood Avenue, Outremont (Quebec)
Canada H2V 2M2

For more information, visit our Web site at: www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca
or contact Sr. Mireille Morin at: TEL (514) 279-0514 | FAX (514) 279-3321 | m.morinmic@sympatico.ca



THE CONTINENT OF HOPE: *ITS FUTURE*

The Fifth General Latin American Episcopal Conference known as CELAM is a key ecclesial event focused on the evangelization of the entire continent. To give this Mission a vibrant launching, Pope Benedict XVI called upon all the bishops to Aparecida, Brazil for a general assembly. The theme? *Disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ so that our people may have life in Him, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life”.* (Jn 14:6)

The majority of Latin Americans were baptized into the Catholic Church. These believers count for almost half of the world's Catholic population. Conscious of its reality and its history, the Church is encountering tremendous challenges in discerning the signs of the times according to the Gospel. She has but one desire: to remain sensitive and to support the deep aspirations of the peoples baptized in the Risen Christ.

Renewal always demands discernment, clear-mindedness, audacity. Today the Church must offer a meaningful presence, be a source of life and communion for all the peoples of a continent well-known as the continent of HOPE.

As President of the Conference of Religious in Cuba, Sr. Gloria Pérez Pupo, M.I.C. was among the many participants who attended this important Latin American event.

Let us remember all those Christians in our prayers.

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*Lord God, Creator of the Universe,
You have entrusted to my care
Planet Earth.*

*Today, I am awakened to the fact
that Mother Earth is in my hands.*

*Help me to safeguard
her bountifulness,
to consume equitably,
thinking of others
and the future generations.*

*Mutilated, Planet Earth suffers!
She needs my friendship and help
that she may become once again
beautiful, generous, welcoming.*

*With much love,
I want to care for her
that she may grow revitalised
and luxurious.*

*This splendid universe, God Father,
You have created for me,
for my happiness and joy.
Help me to re-create this paradise
where it is good to live
in peace and harmony.*

