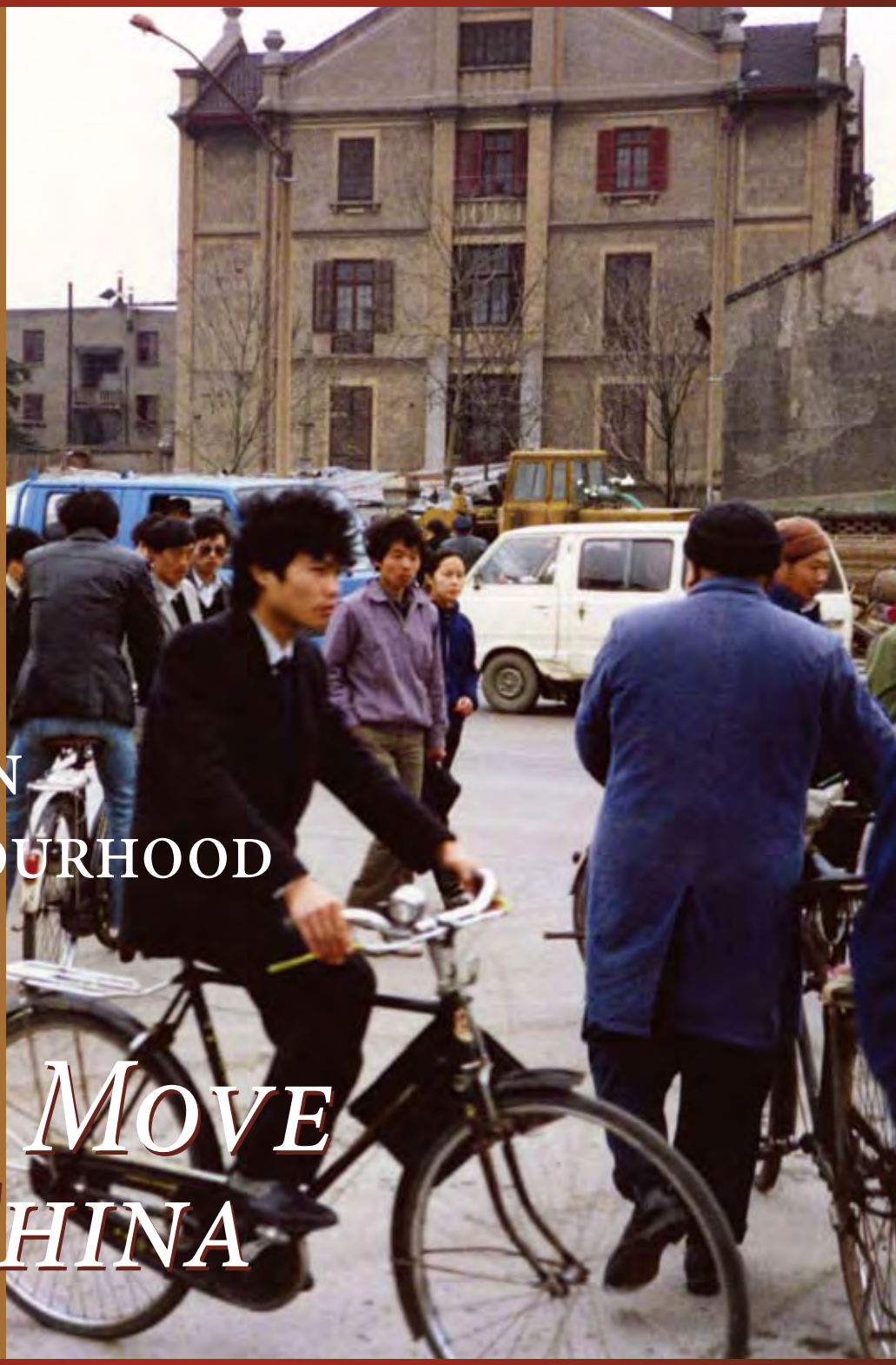
MIC
Mission News
SINCE 1923
VOL. 36, Nº 1 | JANUARY ▪ FEBRUARY ▪ MARCH 2009 | $3.00



Canton, CHINA

The MICs and China *Already 100 Years*

Montreal, CANADA

A Chinese in My Neighbourhood

In focus

On The Move With China

Publication of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

JANUARY

For full Unity of all Christians
May the different Christian confessions be committed to announcing the Good News and moving towards full unity of all Christians.

FEBRUARY

For Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Africa
May the Church in Africa promote reconciliation, justice and peace efficaciously throughout Africa.

MARCH

For all Catholics in the Popular Republic of China
May all Catholics in China, in accordance with Pope Benedict's letter, be the sign and instrument of unity, communion and peace.

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***

CONTENTS

VOL. 36, Nº 1 | JANUARY ▪ FEBRUARY ▪ MARCH 2009

COLUMNS

SPIRITUAL LIFE
4 **A Chinese in My Neighbourhood**
André Gadbois

MISSIONARY WITNESS
6 **A Man for Freedom**
Marie-Thérèse Beaudette, M.I.C.

WOMEN
8 **Re-surfacing**
Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C.

YOUTH
10 **A Ministry Blessed by God**
Marthe Lai, M.I.C.

IN FOCUS

13–20 ON THE MOVE WITH CHINA

ABOUT THE MICs

21 **An Unexpected Multiplication!**
Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C.

22 **Shanghai, Yesterday and Today**
Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

24 **A Touching Pilgrimage**
Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

MIC Mission News
Mission magazine published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Offices
Missionary Press MIC
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval, QC Canada H7G 1A4
Phone: **(450) 663-6460**
Fax: **(450) 972-1512**
Email: **micmissionnews@pressemic.org**
Web site: **www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca**

Directress of Publication
Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Administrative Assistant
Carole Guévin
Editors
Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
André Gadbois
Translation
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
Robin Dick
In Collaboration
Linda Anderson, PhD
Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

Promotion
Antoinette Castonguay, M.I.C.
Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C.
Circulation
Monique Lagarde
Accounting
Thérèse Déziel, M.I.C.
Layout & Design
CoopDesign
Printing
Solisco
Cover
Canton, CHINA
Photo credit:
M.-T. Beaudette, M.I.C.

Editorial Board
Monique Bigras, M.I.C.
Pauline Williams, M.I.C.
Geneviève Dick
André Gadbois
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 issue: $3 (plus mailing costs)
1 year: $12, 2 years: $22, 3 years: $30
USA: 1 year: US$18
International: 1 year: $25

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

MIC?

What does the acronym MIC stand for? Made in Canada – Made in China or – Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception? The three answers make sense; in fact, the three are strongly linked.

China holds a special place in the heart of the MICs (Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception), particularly this year 2009. One hundred years ago, six young MIC Sisters embarked a commercial ship heading for China. The small Community founded by Délia Tétreault in Quebec ***(Made in Canada)*** had only seven years of existence. These young women, in their early 20s, left for a lifetime mission in a country then unknown to most Canadians of that era. Consequently, the MIC mission ***Ad Extra*** had its beginnings in China ***(Made in China)***.

Today, everybody speaks about China; newspaper headlines and the media try to cover all the facets of that country. We praise its rapid economic growth, its dazzling development, and also mention certain hidden aspects which are less glorious. The 2008 Olympic Games confirmed, in a stunning way, the athletic and artistic performances of the Chinese. ***Exceptional Games***, the CIO President, Jacques Rogge proclaimed. They were able to combine modern elements with their traditional ways, symbolizing happiness, harmony and spirit of the celebration.

Deeply imbued with this ancient Chinese tradition, the MIC pioneers could have received a cultural… golden medal!

1909-2009—Over the one hundred years, the Sisters ON THE MOVE WITH CHINA, lived through the country's evolution. They experienced in their being the poverty, the fears of a Maoist revolution, and today the re-birth of the Church of China. They participate in the training of young recruits in Chinese religious communities who are gradually resurfacing. Faithful to the past, they gladly and concretely bring their contribution though in a modest and discreet way.

Looking over the hundred years lived in close collaboration with the Church of China, much could be said on this centennial anniversary. We hope that the chosen topics, though limited, will be of interest to you. This edition pays homage to our very courageous pioneers of China, many of whom left their lives there in the name of their faith.

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

Photo credit: MIC Archives

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.*

Georgette Frenette
– Sorel-Tracy, QC
As I read through your magazine, I can't help but admire all those generous people who work abroad to bring the Good News. I wish to renew my subscription because it brings sunshine in my life and it helps me to be good.

Roquina Orillaneda, ASMIC
– Montreal, QC
As I read through the Oct.-Dec. issue of your magazine, I thanked God for the MIC Sisters' apostolic work in the Philippines. The children's faces reminded me of our Foundress Délia Tétreault`s dream. Thank you for the beautiful photos and congratulations to the staff of *MIC Mission News/Le Précurseur.*

DRAW: African figurine

Mrs. Lorraine Pagé, President of the Board of Administration, draws the name of the lucky winner, who is: Mr. Gabriel Clement, of Salaberry-Valleyfield, Quebec.

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU!

A CHINESE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD

A Chinese lives on my street, an old Chinese who is hunchback. We have not seen him often, because around his house there is a Chinese wall. *(Song: A Chinese by George Dor, Poet)*

Photos credit: iStockphoto

By **André Gadbois**

In the Montreal district of Rosemont—year 1955: My sister and I lived in a five room house with our mother and grand mother as well as our aunt Jeannette and uncle René, mother's sister and brother, both of whom were single. Our father died when I was eight and my sister Thérèse was six. In winter as well as in summer our overheated house was a cocoon of love and generosity. Still, sacrifices were made because of the many insecurities each season brought along and the many mouths that needed to be fed. Nevertheless, we thought of the missions and of the missionaries who worked abroad. At Church and at school we were told that others were worse off than many of us… and we were certain of that. Among others, there were the Chinese.

Between the boys' school and that of the girls stood a huge stone church in the midst of noisy streets where children played, screamed, laughed: a church rich, proud and defiant, as if to say to misery that sharing would have the last word. This church was also defiant in its stand against the Protestants and Anglicans who read and interpreted the Bible. There were also the other world religions whose God was not ours. This church, like a mother hen, protected its own sometimes beyond limits. She would tell us to admire the missionaries who would leave all behind to go abroad and give their lives for others…

A mystery had touched us!

and we were convinced. Among others, there were the Chinese.

On the west side of Papineau Street, near Beaubien, there lived a real Chinaman! He intrigued us and we feared him. Seeing photos of Chinese in a grade six class, that was fine because we knew about the Holy Childhood Association. But to see a real living Chinese with a slight smile and tired eyes that was something else. He was not the only one to frighten us: the Jewish man with his long curly hair and bizarre looking hat and the coloured person also left us perplexed... but somehow Jackie Robinson reassured us with his great accomplishments on the baseball field. He was my hero along with Maurice Richard of the Montreal Canadians hockey team and Herb Trawick of the Alouettes football team. But this Chinese man… living in Rosemont was one of a kind and certainly not an athlete. I was ignorant of the courage the Chinese had had building the first railroad track in West Canada; our school never spoke about that!

When mother sent us to the Chinese man (the only one we knew and approached), there was hesitation. Nevertheless, as in those days, we made sacrifices for her and we went although we felt uneasy and worried. I never went alone, my sister Thérèse or friends would come along. Why this hesitation and fear? It was dark inside his boutique! Still the dimness did not prevent us from observing that this Chinaman was hunchback, as if he was carrying a very heavy load: Was he tired? sick? lonely? Nevertheless, his posture did not limit him from walking with quick small steps, and smiling ever so slightly.

Today, fifty years later, I wonder what his thoughts were about: the country he had left behind because he disagreed with the politics; his family members whom he had not seen for a very long time; his former friends, his house and its lovely garden. There was sadness on his face, and when we left his boutique no one spoke, or laughed; we walked blocks in silence. A mystery had touched us! Back from our errand, and in the alley, we began talking about the Chinaman: ***Where are his children? Why are they not in school? Why doesn't he come to church on Sunday? Does he ever come out of his boutique? We never see him on the street! No pictures of China in his shop!***

In his little boutique was a simple wall to wall counter, painted in a dark color. A semi enclosure was mounted with a grille which separated us; it looked like the banks we would see in cowboy films. We would ask him for Mrs. Gadbois' parcel; he would tell us the price, often expressed with his hands. We would slide the money underneath the grille; he would push the brown parcel towards us and we would leave as quickly as possible. At home, mother would open the package without tearing it; she would keep the paper for aunt Jeannette who designed her patterns on it. Looking at the content, mother would admire the whiteness of my uncle's starched shirts and would exclaim: ***Only he can do such good work as this!*** This comment, filled with gratitude, gradually eliminated the fear I had of this Chinaman whom I have never forgotten; it also convinced me of the greatness of all those small important gestures—those of a mother as well as those of a Chinese laundry man.

A MAN FOR FREEDOM

April 1, 2007—Pope Benedict XVI, asked Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun to remain as head of the diocese of Hong Kong, notwithstanding his request to be discharged from his functions because of his age. Who is Cardinal Zen? What is his role within the Church of China?

By Marie-Thérèse Beaudette, M.I.C.

If you happen to meet Cardinal Zen, you are struck by the charm of his simplicity, his attentive ear, his clear conversation that helps you understand the complex situations that exist between the Vatican and the Beijing Government. The Cardinal is an important personality, protecting the freedoms of Hong Kong. He also holds dear to his heart the dossier of the Church of China. Cardinal Zen is an unflinching defender of human rights, political freedom, religious liberty. He upholds the true values of human beings, their real needs, the respect and the support they claim for.

DEFENDER OF SCHOOLS

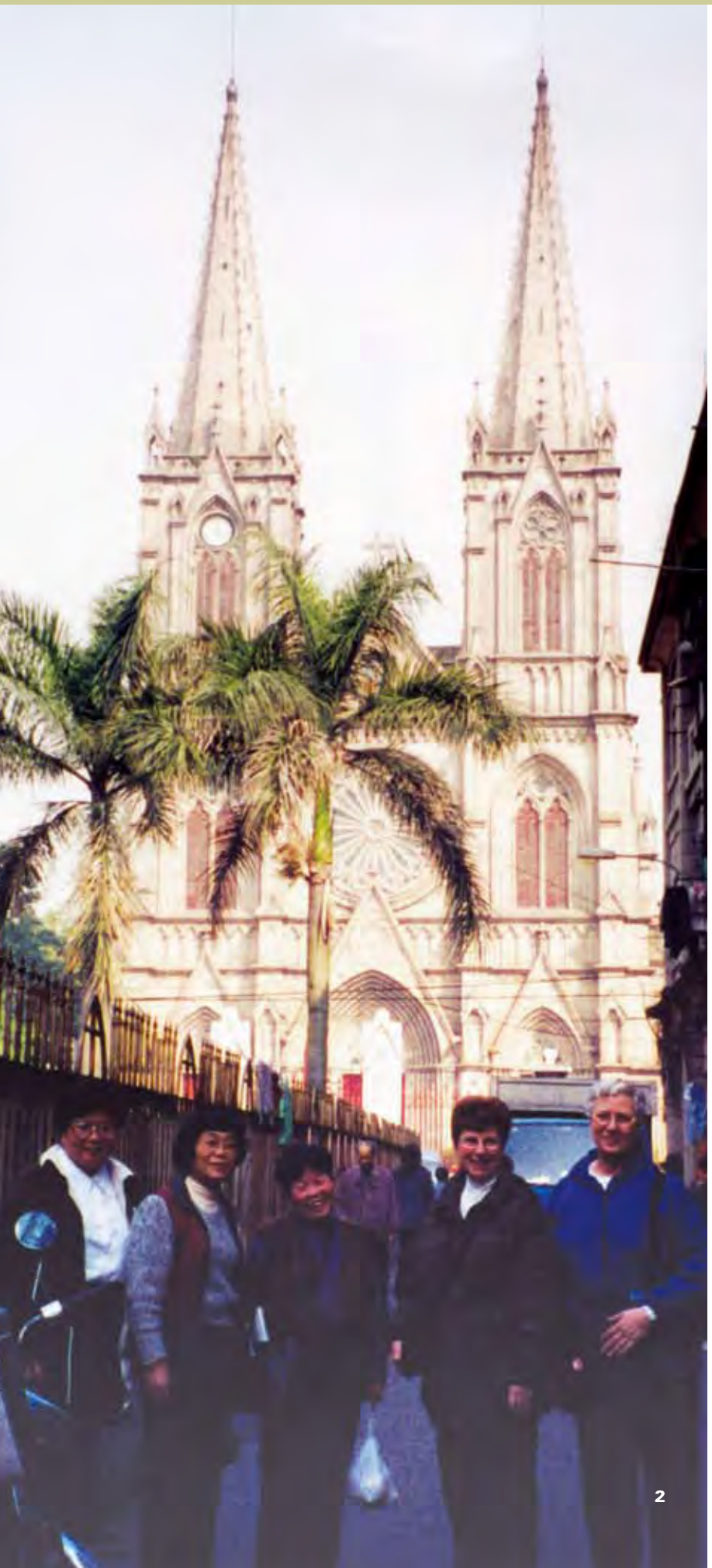
In 2004, the Beijing Government imposed a new law requiring structural uniformity in all schools. This law would destroy years of marvelous plurality which was Hong Kong's pride throughout the world. Cardinal Zen reacted. He registered a complaint before the Justice Department in Hong Kong stating that this law would likely play down the role of the Church in running Catholic schools and in promoting Catholic education. While visiting the Chinese in diaspora, the Cardinal did not miss an opportunity to bring this issue to their awareness.

PERSONA NON GRATA

His outspokenness is not appreciated by all. For years, strained relationships have existed between the Vatican and Beijing. On the continent, Cardinal Zen has been a *de facto PERSONA NON GRATA*. However, the atmosphere became a bit more relaxed when in 2004 he was invited to a pilgrimage in his native city, Shanghai. In Rome, the Cardinal is greatly appreciated and is supported by all. After the Asian Bishops' Synod took place, the late Pope John Paul II appointed him member of the post synodal council and Pope Benedict XVI chose him to be a member of the post synodal council on the Eucharist.

FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM

Today, Cardinal Zen is the only active Chinese Cardinal less than 80 years of age.



2

As a Bishop, he has incarnated and defended human rights, not only in Hong Kong but also in China. A religious Salesian priest, living in a country dominated by politicized and complex discourses, he has never hesitated to denounce, in plain language, the reality of the issues. Explicitly, the Cardinal analyses, in depth, the censured political system and the hidden oppression. In his direct style, he denounces the lack of religious freedom in China. With the Holy See, he is engaged in a delicate process of diplomatic negotiation following a letter written by Pope Benedict XVI, June 2007, claiming space for justice and religious freedom in China.

A SIGN OF HOPE

Though there are signs of progress, tension and control are always present. Persecutions and arrests continued even during the Olympic Games, a time when the world was watching and eyeing China. Cardinal Zen is seen as a great sign of hope for the twelve million Catholics in that country. Moreover, it is considered that religion has a significant impact on politics, education and the economy. Overall, the current situation gives rise to optimism.

But not all has been won. The fight for the respect of human rights continues. The Cardinal, the great fighter, remains very committed to that cause, because he knows the needs of all, no matter their background. His graciousness and his welcoming smile make people feel at ease. He never hesitates to meet someone at an impromptu meeting.

Cardinal Zen is the conscience of Hong Kong. He tries to make sure that human rights are respected, political and religious freedom are observed. Unequivocally, he expresses himself like Christ recommends us to do in Matthew 5:37—***Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'.*** The Cardinal is the moral voice of the people!

---

[1] Cardinal Zen and Sr. Marie-Thérèse Beaudette, M.I.C.

Photo credit: Nicole Rochon

[2] Cathedral of Canton, China

Photo credit: L. Leung, M.I.C.

RE-SURFACING

In China, many religious communities lived through the revolution and were disbanded. However, isolated Chinese Sisters who remained faithful to their commitments have re-surfaced. Today, many young Chinese women join them and their communities are reviving. Sister Huguette, a former missionary in Taiwan, has been meeting them and giving them sessions in psycho-spirituality.

Never has anyone succeeded in extinguishing the fire of faith, even in its darkest nights and dungeons. NEVER!

By **Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C.**

In 2004, I was asked to give a session to major Superiors of the religious communities in China; forty took part in the program which included physical exercises, artistic expressions, workshops, sharing activities and prayers. The theme HEART-BODY-SPIRIT responded well to a much needed integral formation.

In 2005, I went to Taiyuan to give the above formation. Fifty-eight religious women from sixteen Chinese Provinces participated. Two of the Sisters attending came from Chung Ching and belonged to the community which the MICs had founded years back. We had something in common and felt at ease with each other. I was struck by the great need of a renewal in those communities. The Sisters eagerly received what they learned and hoped to transmit newness to their static congregations.

Today, I notice that they have become more mature and determined to live their religious life in a social context that is often hostile. Their life is not easy: a Sister was harshly beaten because she claimed the piece of land that she owned.

WHO ARE THESE YOUNG SISTERS?

Many of them have a medical training—four to five years of college. One of them has her PhD in medicine. Most of the congregations have hospitals and dispensaries. Practically all of them have been initiated to the Chinese medicine, acupuncture, massage… Certain congregations have no convent—the Sisters live alone or with another Sister in a small apartment. The community meetings are held at one place or the other. In this context, it is very difficult for them to understand the impact and depth of their vows. These congregations have twenty-five years of existence and experience difficulties: power conflict, leadership, interference from some members of the clergy. Anytime, scissions can arise—imagine the conflict in a community where the superior general, imposed by the bishop, is no other than the daughter of a communist. Unfortunately, the source of the disputes is often… money.

The Sisters need encouragement. Some are anxious about their future. All along this missionary journey, I entrusted myself to our deceased missionaries who worked years in China.

Sessions and workshops with Sr. Huguette
Photos credit: MIC

THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH

A Sister from this Church followed two weeks of sessions with me. She spoke to us about the context of her life. Often, these religious live alone, incognito, and come together discreetly. Though very simple, they appreciated the food that was served at the Centre: rice, noodles, some vegetables, tofu, steamed bread, small fish and a bit of meat each week.

In China, we cannot negate the existence of the Catholic Church. The resistance of the faithful members, the priests, the religious and the bishops, led the civil authorities to take a stance and they created the Patriotic Association of the Catholic Church in China, which is governed by the ministry of Religious Affairs.

MULTIPLE GREEN SHOOTS

In principle, land has been returned to property owners: dioceses and congregations. Dioceses and parishes are reappearing. Carrying the millennial burden of culture, revolution, repressions and persecutions, the Catholic youth of China is courageously organizing itself. Never has anyone succeeded in extinguishing the fire of faith, even in its darkest nights and dungeons. NEVER!

Multiple green shoots are emerging from the furrows of a soil ploughed by persecutions. The strength of the Christians resides in their patience and capacity to adapt to difficult circumstances.

Today, building structures are renovated—churches are repaired and painted in the hope of attracting tourists. Recently, five young priests have been ordained; people came from all over to witness this event and the church was overcrowded. What moves me most is the attitude of the elderly—they have forgiven the crushing past, the persecutions they have endured because of their faith. Today, they live their faith openly and are happy to do so.

THE REBIRTH OF THE CHURCH OF CHINA

How gratifying it is, for the daughters of Délia, to participate in the rebirth of the Church of China! In Beijing, I met Sr. Marthe Lai, M.I.C., Provincial Superior in Taiwan. She was animating a one month retreat for the religious. Called to this ministry, she has been coming at intervals with other Chinese MIC Sisters. Recently, Sr. Marthe found a place where the MICs could have a pied-à-terre in China which would greatly facilitate their work in the formation of these young religious Chinese Communities.

Sr. Celia Chua is another MIC who gives retreats to many young religious women. Having a better understanding of their consecration to God, they are blossoming and are preparing to give better service within their Catholic Church.

MY IMPRESSIONS

These trips, which seem to be at the other end of the world, are… long! My first impression—everything seemed grey, lifeless, and monotonous. However, from this image appeared stars of hope.

During the Olympic Games, representatives from various faith backgrounds were present and offered their special services to the participants. These were given in: French, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and Korean. Of all the temples that were built for this purpose, the Catholic church is the only one that will remain.

My sessions are given at the Formation Center located on a large campus. From this site, we see a church that went through the throes of the Communist regime—a dilapidated structure with its broken windows. However, the Center is in good condition; European benefactors help to keep it functioning but the blatant needs are an eye opener.

The decision to pursue the formation program, destined particularly for women consecrated to God, is a way to bring about change and a better future for the Church in China.

A MINISTRY *BLESSED BY GOD*

When the Communist regime took power in 1949, all foreign missionaries in China were forced to leave the country. Many priests, religious, and Christians were imprisoned or persecuted in various ways. China was reduced to silence. Today, young religious vocations abound and spiritual formation is in demand.

[1] A group of participants
[2] The joy of sharing
Photos credit: MIC

By **Marthe Lai,** M.I.C.

God never abandoned China. Throughout its years of great sufferings, families lived their faith deeply and unconditionally. As of 1980, China gradually began opening its doors. Since then, like many other missionaries, a good number of MIC Sisters have tried, individually, each in her own capacity, to come back to China, a mission land so dear to our Foundress.

FIRST DESTINATION

Currently, my main work in China is focused on retreats and formation. While offering directed retreats, I also give training sessions to people interested in spiritual accompaniment and retreats. This is done in collaboration with Sr. Miyama Atsuko, RSCJ; Father Paul Duffy, MM; and Sr. Angela Liao, MP. The vice president of China's Patriotic Church, Mr. Liu Bainien, acknowledges the important role women religious have in the field of Evangelization. Every year, he organizes programs for the superiors of religious communities and he offers training programs to all Chinese religious interested in spiritual companioning and retreat work.

In 2004, Mr. Liu invited us to Beijing to give the formation sessions to the Sisters. It is a five year program. The trainers come to Beijing once a year. Each session lasts six to eight weeks. The participants come from different regions of China. The first couple years there were twenty Sisters participating in this program; however, with time, there have been drop outs—one or two per year. In September 2008, twelve participants completed their training.

The content of the program includes an eight day guided retreat which is very much appreciated by the participants. There are courses in spirituality and workshops where they share their experiences. During the five years, they follow St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises; this is an important learning experience and they are guided by well trained specialists in that field. The participants also receive materials that can help them develop their skills in spiritual direction and retreats. Evenings are spent reading, reflecting and assimilating what they have learned, each one taking a conscious look at her day and evaluating it in the presence of the Lord.

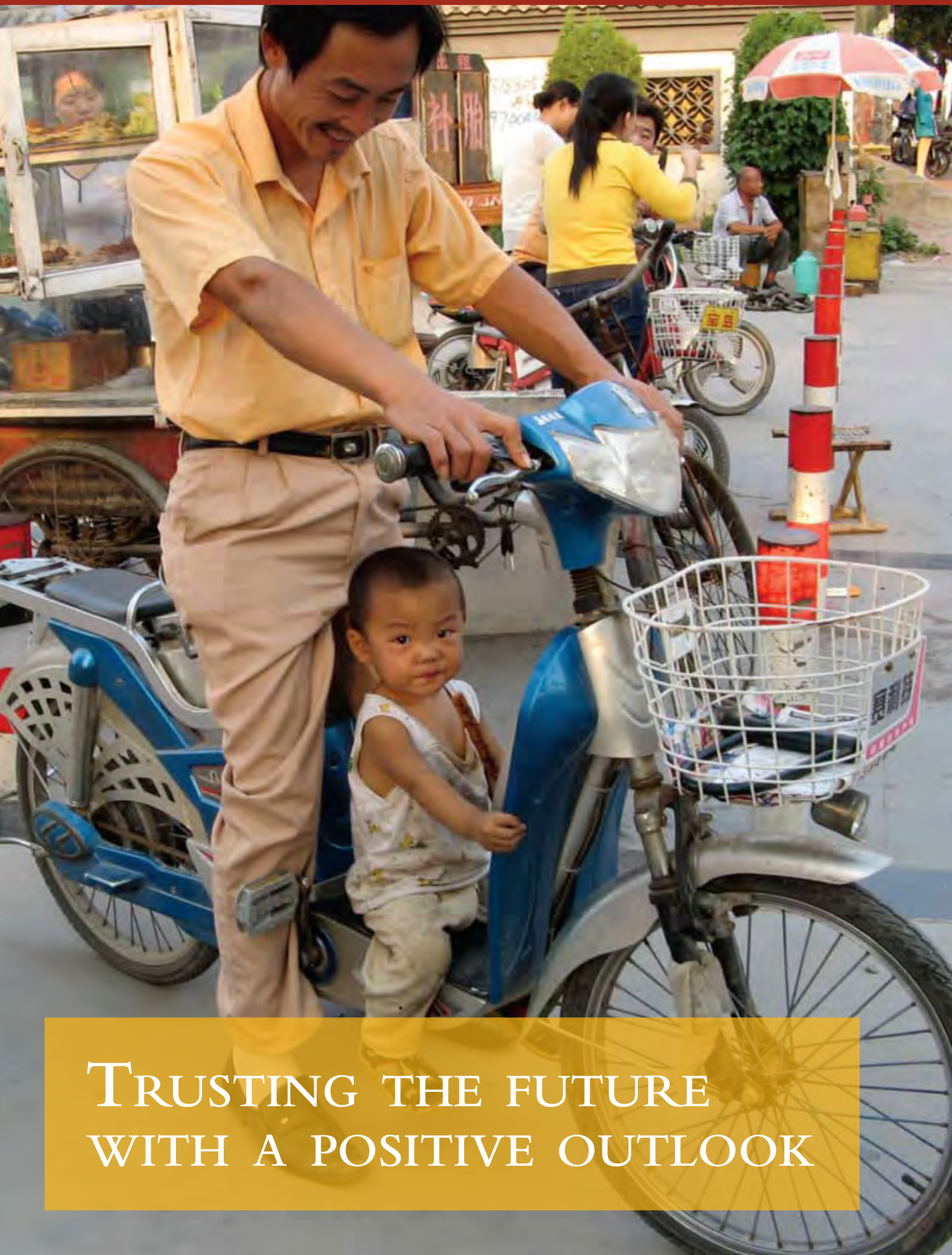
This encounter with the loving God always transforms a life.

In 2007, under the supervision of their directors, the Chinese Sisters began their practicum by providing guided retreats. Capable of working in teams, they spread out to different religious communities. A year later, when they returned from their experience, we saw how well they had grown and integrated what they had learned in the training program. For us, this has been a great consolation because we are well aware that these women religious are the seed of hope for the Church of China.

SACRED SPACE

My other ministry is with a team of spiritual directors from Taiwan. We give guided retreats or Ignatian Spiritual Exercises to priests and to different groups of religious communities in China. Their openness and humility always surprises me when they come to share their lives and prayers. They generously let me enter their 'holy land' and their 'sacred space'. One of the important roles of a spiritual director is to help individuals become aware of God's presence in each one's life; to discover and contemplate with these people how God has been present in the ups and downs of life, in pain and in happiness, in the struggles and in their liberation. It is easy to listen to their experiences. However, often times, they need to find meaning in their suffering and find God present in that pain. I often use our Mother Foundress' words: ***Under the cross, we find love and hope.*** When a person discovers that God is truly present in the suffering, Jesus then becomes a personal Savior; this encounter with the loving God always transforms a life.

It is a blessing for me to journey inward with so many people. My God experience keeps growing and intensifying as I listen to each one's prayers and sacred life story. For them, as well as for myself, the Magnificat is not only a prayer but a life experience. Each time I have the opportunity to journey with people, I feel my MIC vocation becomes increasingly alive and I deeply understand our Mother Foundress' words: ***God has given us everything, even His only Son; what better way of making return, inasmuch as an earthly creature is capable of doing so, than to give Him children, chosen ones, who also will sing His Goodness throughout the centuries.***



Trusting the future with a positive outlook

On The Move With China

In memory of our Pioneers

August 3, 1913 Canton, China: Workers' revolutionary strike

The situation in Canton had become so serious that the Sisters, with all the orphans, had to leave their convent. They found refuge in Hong Kong and were welcomed by the Sisters of St-Paul de Chartres. They traveled on foot and boat with millions of other refugees who were escaping from the horrors of the war. The journey was a tragic one because of the distance. Each one carried more than she possibly could. Imagine this long caravan of 150 people, walking in the rain, carrying on their shoulders long bamboos holding parcels of all dimensions and colours. (MIC Archives)

A Disconcerting *Giant*

At a 'Relations' meeting recently, Mr. Mouloud Idir, research and communications agent at the Justice and Faith Centre, placed us squarely in the situation right from his word of welcome—a colossal reflection since it concerns China.

By Mouloud Idir

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CHINESE BOOM

I must begin by saying that the theme of growth is itself worth questioning. We are dealing here with an indicator of economic health that obeys a well determined logic, and it is undoubtedly worthwhile questioning the indicators that underpin this idea. From the point of view of an alternative worldview that is critical of globalization, there is a whole debate about other notions such as declining growth.

I am telling you nothing new by saying that China is a disconcerting giant. It is currently enjoying the benefits of a flourishing economy, which however does not respect the liberal market norms. Specialists say that the country's political system is archaic, corrupt, and even inefficient. The annual rate of growth is nonetheless 9.5%. Still, as we know, growth does not always go hand in hand with social justice and the equitable distribution of wealth. Many African states show growth rates that are superior to those of industrialized Western States, yet large sections of African societies suffer from poverty and marginalization.

In spite of glaring inequities, the Chinese regime, for its part, continues to guarantee a minimum of order and stability, often at the price of regimentation and the monopolization of all the meaningful structures in Chinese society.

While modern lifestyles can be observed, ***communitarian*** logic continues to dominate the social arena. What is most disconcerting is to try to understand a system in which a ubiquitous capitalist logic reigns even while the official ideology claims to be socialist, and is even ruled by a communist party. Here we see a colossal paradox, one which the Chinese administrative elite have chosen to label with the academic-sounding ***market socialism***.

CHINA'S PLACE ON THE WORLD STAGE

At the world level, China is beginning to claim its own market share against world powers such as the United States and the European Union. For the African continent alone, bilateral trade with China reached more than $55 billion, an increase of 40% over 2005. This represents a considerable reduction in market share for the former world powers.

The ex-Middle Empire seems to be in the process of becoming a superpower in its own right. Thanks to its economic successes, China is seeking to play a prime role: vis-à-vis Europe, a strong economic yet politically hesitant power, vis-à-vis the U.S., its only serious rival on the world stage in its own view, and finally, vis-à-vis the rest of the world: Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, all economic areas of interest for China. This attitude has been reconfirmed in crises such as those in Iran or North Korea, which are all cards that Beijing, as a permanent member of the very exclusive private club of the United Nations Security Council, can of course cynically play in the game of international rivalries. In the game of cynicism and of maximizing its private interests on a world scale, China is experiencing a sort of mirror effect as a result of practices all too familiar to Western powers when it comes to defending the interests of their dominant classes at any cost.

POWER AND NATIONALISM

China's rise in power has also been accompanied by resurgent nationalism, which may become a determining factor in China's future diplomacy. The theme comes to light above all in its relations with Japan and in the status of Taiwan, and of course in the question of Tibet, which is constantly manipulated in dealings with Beijing, at the expense of the Tibetan people's right to dignity. For the uninitiated, it is not easy to see clearly in this debate, which only underscores the need to hold fast to positions of principle.

Furthermore, 27 years after the economy was opened up, an event which dates back to 1979, three years after the death of Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese version of a market economy is quite fascinating. Its success has been accompanied by openness to foreign investment, to reforms in the financial and banking markets, and to a renewal of the social classes.

Thanks to its economic successes, China is seeking to play a prime role.

These developments, however, have come along with an increase in inequalities and injustices, according to numerous observers. Movements of Social protests have multiplied, mainly in rural areas. Other groups deplore the phenomenon of corruption. In sectors like real estate, prices have skyrocketed. Pollution is only growing worse.

The 2008 Summer Olympics brought pressures to bear from all sides, and through the Darfur question in particular, since the Chinese regime is seen as a supporter of the Sudanese regime. It is worth noting that the petroleum interests of Beijing and the Sudan are significant. It is therefore not surprising to observe the ever growing role that Chinese leaders are playing in the world, especially since an elite, increasingly aware of the global stakes involved, is gradually taking over the Chinese State apparatus. This administrative elite has largely been trained in the best Western universities, and for the most part will have adopted the West's dominant ways of thinking.

Page 12: A street in JingXian
Photo credit:
Huguette Chapdelaine, M.I.C.
Page 13: Canton: Departure with the orphans (1913)
Photo credit: MIC Archives
Page 14: Shanghai
Photo credit: stock.xchng

ALREADY ONE HUNDRED YEARS!

2009: Centennial of the Mission of Canton, China. The adventure of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in China goes back to April 1908. The Community then counts only fifteen members. Together, they begin a novena asking for a sign that would reveal where the first mission abroad is calling them. Half way through the novena the Apostolic Prefect of Canton, Msgr. Jean-Marie Mérel, priest of the Foreign Missions in Paris, comes to the Mother House in Outremont—he has a request.

They left for a lifetime! The trip lasted weeks...

By **Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.**

SEPTEMBER 8, 1909

The Archbishop of Montreal, Msgr. Paul Bruchési and the Foundress, Mother Marie of the Holy Spirit (Délia Tétreault) mull over the request of Msgr. Mérel. There is a need in Canton: A French Community, Catechists of Marie-Immaculée have to leave their mission work due to lack of personnel. The challenge is enormous, the work is multiple: school, nursery, orphanage, refuge, dispensary. Having faith in Providence, the decision is taken; China will be our first mission. Six young professed Sisters are assigned to Canton. Their departure takes place at the Cathedral in Montreal, on September 8, 1909. In his farewell address, in the presence of more than one thousand faithful who are attending the ceremony, Msgr. Bruchési stresses: ***It is the first time that Canada witnesses a departure of missionaries who are from a national Institute and whose exclusive goal is: missions abroad.***

Departures for China succeed one after the other; the main mission of Canton grows in personnel and works. In 1913, the Foundress agrees to send four Sisters at the leprosarium in Shek Lung, an island close to Canton where there are hundreds of victims of the disease. They will stay in service until they are expelled in 1952.

IN MANCHURIA

Out of the willingness of the Quebec bishops, who want to participate in the great missionary movement of the Church, the Société des Missions Étrangères originates in 1921. Six years later, these priests invite the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to join them in Manchuria, north-east of China, where the Société has recently established its first mission posts. The MIC Sisters accept; they spread out and open dispensaries throughout the vast territory. At Szepingkai, they become responsible for the training of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, a community of religious Chinese women, founded by Msgr. L.-A. Lapierre, P.M.É. In 1947, the political situation forces them to leave: they are fifty MICs working in eight localities. However, dif-

[1] Embroidery workshop
[2] Street ministry
Photos credit: MIC Archives
[3] A modern day class
Photo credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

ficult circumstances forces eleven of them to remain behind, isolated, until 1952.

IN HONG KONG

The political situation in Canton is in turmoil. There are uprisings, strikes, civil wars; the Sisters find refuge in Hong Kong. The year 1927—they establish a pied-à-terre in the British colony. From this humble beginning rises great schools which, to this day, continue providing quality education to the Chinese youth.

IN CENTRAL CHINA

Shortly after his consecration in Rome, by Pope Pius XI, Msgr. Simon Tsu, S.J. comes to Montreal before returning home. His goal? To find Sisters who could work in his diocese, near Shanghai. His invitation is accepted by the Superiors of the MIC Institute. In 1928, a small group of missionaries arrive on the Island of Tsung Ming. In addition to taking over the orphanage, the sewing centre, the school, the dispensary, they accept training the local religious Sisters, the Thérèsiennes, a Community that still exists. Well prepared, they replace the Canadian missionaries in 1948. The MICs worked 20 years in the Diocese of Haimen.

IN SUCHOW

In 1934, Msgr. Philippe Côté, S.J., Bishop of Suchow, requests the presence of the MIC Sisters in his Diocese. Four missionaries arrive in Suchow, a city located half-way between Beijing (Pékin) and Shanghai. They are involved in health care, education, and social services. In 1948, they must leave the area because of political unrest.

BEGINNING OF THE EXODUS

Wherever they are sent, the Sisters assume many responsibilities. However, the numerous internments due to wars, the political unrest and power taken over by a government unfavorable to missionaries, obliges them to gradually leave China. The exodus begins in Manchuria—1947: thirty Sisters take refuge at Tsung Ming, then spread out to other missions. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines are the happy beneficiaries. The Sisters' knowledge of the Chinese culture and language facilitates their integration and their collaboration in developing new fields of work. In many Canadian and American cities, Chinese Centres are organized to offer services to the Chinese immigrants. Here, in Quebec, the Sisters visit schools, they speak about the missions, the Pontifical Works of the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood. Their presentations leave a long lasting impression from one generation to another.

Between 1909 and 1952, one hundred forty-nine MIC Sisters lived in China. When they departed from Canton, they left behind Sr. Lucia Ho, the first Chinese woman to join the MICs. Not until 1980 was she able to return to the Community. Seventeen Sisters died in China and were interred in their mission land. A few valiant missionaries, who lived in China, are still alive and reside with us in Laval. Thirty MICs of Chinese origin now share our common mission: ***Proclaim the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ to those who do not know it.***

THE MIC SISTERS AND CHINA IN 2009

September 8, 2009, highlights the one-hundredth anniversary of the first MIC departure for China. Today, with rapid air travel and modern ways of communicating, it is difficult to imagine what it was like to embark on a long journey in 1909. The young missionaries were heroic! And they left for a lifetime! The trip lasted weeks, their letters to family members and to the Mother House took months before reaching destination. Also, they experienced being uprooted, encountered dangers and difficulties of all kinds; they lived through it all! This anniversary is an opportunity for us to recall the heroic choices of our pioneers, and to keep in our hearts, like they have done, a great love for China and for our Chinese brothers and sisters.

TO FIND OUT MORE

GAUTHIER, Chantal, *Women Without Frontiers: A History of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, 1902-2007*, Montreal. Les Éditions Carte Blanche, 2008.

China in Search of its Soul

A missionary to the Orient, Sister Fleurette Lagacé is very interested in the Chinese culture. In Canada, she founded the Amitié-Chine Organization which allows her to keep in contact with many Chinese people. The fundamental questions of the Chinese culture, especially those that concern the Chinese soul, keep intriguing her.

Buddhist prayer
Photo credit: MIC

By Fleurette Lagacé, M.I.C.

The title of this article refers to SOUL MOUNTAIN, whose author, Gao Xingjian, won the Nobel prize for literature in the year 2000. In order to reach the Chinese soul, it seems to me, one must peel away the mythological stories with which the written and oral history of the Chinese journey is strewn.

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

For the past several years, I have been attempting to climb the Chinese SOUL MOUNTAIN within the perspective of its history. I have come to the same conclusion that Gao Xingjian expresses in the concluding lines of his voluminous book: ***Actually, I understand nothing, strictly nothing. That's how it is.***

Like Gao, I first went looking in the legends, the philosophy and the various religions of China. Then I gave up trying to understand… Just like certain readers of SOUL MOUNTAIN, who have confessed to me that they gave up reading the book, thereby missing the conclusion: ***pretending to understand, but in fact understanding nothing***. Is this to say that the Chinese soul is incomprehensible? No, it means that Gao gave up trying to understand. In doing so, he is faithful to the Buddhist attitude that permeates the Chinese soul: that of not knowing, of nothingness, of being lost in the great whole, the void…

THE CHINESE SOUL: WHERE CAN IT BE FOUND?

The Chinese soul is not expressed in a book like the Koran or the Bible. The Chinese soul is musical like its language, which defies the complicated grammat-

Life's truth does not resemble its outward image.

ical analysis of the French kind, and in which the pictogram expresses the whole word in a few strokes of the brush.

If the soul of a people is expressed through its religions, Taoism was the first religion to speak to the Chinese, exalting nature to the point of superstition. It remains at the heart of the soul of a people more than a billion strong, 80% of whom are peasants. The most ancient legends attribute extraordinary powers to the followers of TAO, powers that Chinese screens reinforce with special effects in movie theatres. Still, writes Gao, ***life's truth does not resemble its outward image.*** In any case, Taoism does not keep any records so it is useless to look for statistics. The same can be said of Buddhism even if numbers can be produced: Chinese are said to be 90% Buddhist.

OTHER WAYS

The Silk Route put a fez on the Chinese soul: Muslims can be found in 56 national minorities, totalling 105 million Non-Hans (Hans form the majority of the population of China). Their face has become more or less Chinese, but their soul is Muslim and they cling to their customs, their language and their past.

The Chinese government seems to have taken advantage of the global anti-terrorist campaign to force the transformation of ethnic groups, of Muslims and Buddhists with particular physical traits, like the Lamaist Tibetans (the Taoists having remained invisible). But Tibet has resisted allowing the last bastion of the Chinese soul to be destroyed in the agglomerate of false national modernism.

THE FOREIGNER, ACCORDING TO THE CHINESE SOUL

Has missionary evangelism spoken to the Chinese soul? For several centuries, China has answered: ***No! Christianity is foreign to the Chinese soul.*** Everything that is not Chinese remains foreign to Chinese thinking.

I was a foreigner in China when I taught second languages there. Now, in Canada, when speaking about me and my compatriots, my friends of Chinese origin say: ***You, the foreigners!*** I protest more often than not, because I refuse to be stateless. Could it be that the Chinese are at home everywhere? Maybe that's what the Chinese soul means: a feeling of being at home everywhere on the planet—a feeling that comes from Taoism? I really think so.

AVENUES TO EXPLORE

I have often thought about the future of our planet. In my relationship with China, I have thought that it was all about reconciling my cultural experience with that of my Chinese friends. I attempted to integrate by going to live among them. But I had to MELT AWAY, which was impossible for me (because of my own cultural attachments), and I was reproached for it. Then, I thought I had to make as many friends as possible by trying to forget our differences. And I was still reproached for not DISAPPEARING completely, which is what my Chinese friends manage to do in their own country!

In the course of a discussion about human rights, I understood that disharmony could be found in the very terms that seek to create harmony. For China, to sign an international agreement on human rights was no problem, despite the real abuses they were accused of. By translating Human Rights by ***droits de la personne*** (rights of the person), I understood the misunderstanding in the deep sense of the term ***person***.

The Chinese culture, its customs and history, sacrifice the PERSON to what we call the COMMON GOOD. Since their solidarity assures their survival, ancient civilizations reproach us for our individualism. On the contrary, the West emphasizes the value of the person, recognizing at last the primary value of women. What seems obvious to us is not at all the case for Chinese society, which for centuries has condemned baby girls to die, as a recent title in ***La Presse*** expressed it (***Condamnées à mort***, May 30, 2006).

I was a missionary in China for 25 years and I was always interested in the situation of its Churches. The bishop of Beijing welcomed me as ***Veronica who came to wipe Jesus' tears***, and he said he was ***bent under the weight of the Cross*** (political intrigues). We understood each other in spite of our differences. Msgr. Fu Tie Shan passed away. A faction of the Chinese Catholic Church still calls itself clandestine while the political authorities recognize what is called the patriotic Church. Yet this Church is also called to unity in Christ…

In the human journey toward harmony, will the Chinese soul one day have this sense of universality?

THE CHINESE IN CANADA

This issue which is dedicated to China, reminds me of Délia Tétreault's dream. According to her, the mission meant evangelization—revealing Jesus Christ to all who do not know Him. To be a missionary it was not sufficient to leave one's country and to go abroad.

Text inspired from an article written by Sr. Pauline Longtin, M.I.C., "Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit and the Immigrants" —Le Précurseur, May-June 1977, page 236-241.

[1] Painting —Artist: Tilly Milton, Vancouver, B.C., November 2, 2000

By **Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

Délia was always sensitive to people who were uprooted from their homeland. She had deep compassion for the immigrants. In 1909, the first Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception left for China. Naturally, Délia's great solicitude went toward the Chinese who lived in Canada.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM

The first Chinese came to this country in 1858. They were attracted by the Gold Rush Caribou Stampede along the Fraser River in British Columbia. Like many others, they were seeking better wages; China was poor, overpopulated and people received the minimum to live.

Twenty three years later, a second wave of Chinese arrived in Canada: the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway employed 6,000 Chinese. When completed, in 1885, many were left unemployed; consequently, some decided to come to the eastern provinces. Montreal's Chinese community began to be visible. At first, the population was 100% male; later, some men had their families come to join them.

A DIFFICULT INTEGRATION

The French language and their financial hardships made it difficult for the Chinese to integrate well into a milieu like Montreal. Inspired by their Foundress, the MIC Sisters decided to offer their services on Sundays—classes were organized by the Chinese community. They also visited the people in their homes, in the hospitals, at their work in laundries and cafés. In 1916, two missionaries from China came back to Canada to take charge of the first Chinese school on Anderson Street where they taught French and English.

Then, in 1918, a serious epidemic broke out in Montreal. Without hesitation Délia asked the Archbishop of Montreal to have a care facility specifically for the Chinese population. The project became a reality. Two years later, the Chinese Association asked the MIC Sisters to take over the direction of a hospital and to provide care to the sick.

As always, the Foundress encouraged her missionaries to give quality care: ***Give lavishly your smiles and gentleness, sow joy abundantly—it is the bread most lacking in our world.***

THE CHINESE MISSION EXPANDS

The Chinese families spread throughout Canada. Besides Montreal, they were in Quebec City, Three Rivers, Ottawa and Vancouver. In 1977 Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, in Vancouver, already had 300 beds and up to this day continues catering to the immigrants.

You are now well aware why the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception are so closely linked to the Chinese. Our first call to mission 'ad extra' came… from China, and we are most grateful to God.

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.

Provincial House
10,710 Grande-Allee Street
Montreal (Quebec)
Canada H3L 2M7
Telephone:
(514) 384-4624
Email:
provmic@videotron.ca

Mission Animation Centre
314, Cote Ste-Catherine Rd.
Montreal (Quebec)
Canada H2V 2B4
Telephone:
(514) 495-1551
Email:
animamic@yahoo.ca

www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

Of millennial tradition, the popular religion of Hong Kong and China originates from a syncretism of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. For Thomas, a Chinese from Hong Kong, endorsing the Catholic faith is the response to an inner calling, but it is also the struggle against what his friends could think.

An Unexpected Multiplication!

By **Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C.**

My cousin, Linda, who is Thomas' spouse, has always been a devout woman who prays the rosary every day. She ardently desires her husband to convert to Catholicism. Late August 2007, she asks me, her cousin, to find a priest who could come to her home to bless it. The Blessing service takes place—Thomas is present and observes attentively. A few days later, as he seems rather pensive, Linda asks him: ***Would you like to be baptized?*** The answer is negative. A victim of cancer, Linda knows that he has a very short time to live; therefore, the reply saddens her.

GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

One day, I drop by my cousin's house. During the conversation, she asks Thomas why he refuses to be baptized. In all honesty, he replies: ***If I ask to be baptized, I will disappoint all my people.*** Besides, he feels unworthy of such a grace. I take this opportunity to tell him of God's unconditional love for each one of us, despite our 'unworthiness'.

In his childhood years, Thomas had gone to a Catholic school; therefore, he knows about its teachings and the faith. His mother had also been a devout and fervent officer of the Legion of Mary. Gradually, God's grace works its way through and Thomas accepts to see a priest. One day, Father King comes to meet him and after a long conversation, he realizes that Thomas has the faith and is ready to be baptized, a sacrament that Thomas joyfully accepts to receive.

A TRUE BLESSING

I plan the ceremony and set the date for September 8, feast day of the birth of our Heavenly Mother Mary. The MIC Sisters of Good Hope School and many of his friends are present and witness the Baptism of Thomas which is done in the manner of the first Christian Communities: Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. Thomas' face is radiant with joy!

A few days later, some friends of Thomas who are intrigued by his deep inner joy ask to see Father King. They also want to be baptized and wish to be prepared to receive that sacrament.

Thomas' Baptism has become the 'launching pad' for others to ask to be received in God's family; he who had feared the reactions of his friends, had become their inspiration. Linda is ever grateful that God has chosen her to be an evangelizer; with joy and enthusiasm she reaches out to so many others who are seeking the Way.

Photo credit: Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C.

SHANGHAI, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The Church bells were like God's soothing voice which made me feel that God was always close by.

By **Cecilia Hong,** M.I.C.

SHANGHAI, MY CITY!

Before the Second World War, Shanghai was considered as one of the world's five famous cities. It was a glamorous port of entry, a door opened to the West. The Opium War forced the corrupted Ching Dynasty to lease part of Shanghai to the French and part to the English. This occupation had a great impact on the city of Shanghai. Soon, we saw French and English style houses being constructed, Catholic and Protestant Churches were erected, missionary schools were opened, and the establishment of two famous universities took shape: Aurora University by the French Jesuits and St. John University by the Anglicans. People started to learn English or French and the incoming foreign missionaries began their work of evangelization.

THE ORIGIN OF MY FAITH

Born in a Catholic family I was raised within a religious milieu. For the first six years of my life we lived in a French style Park Apartment which still exists to this day as a heritage building. Each apartment had a balcony overlooking the large circular garden in the middle. My parish, St. Peter's Church, was at a walking distance and the pastor was French speaking. As a child, I attended the morning Mass and afternoon Benediction with my family. Every evening we would say the rosary and night prayers together. The Church became the center of our life. The Church bells were like God's soothing voice which made me feel that He was always close by. It was there that I received my religious education from two nuns who were forced to be laicized, but remained in Shanghai as consecrated virgins. They were later arrested.

THE DOWNFALL OF SHANGHAI

Soon Communism came in and turned the whole country upside down. Shanghai suddenly fell into a black hole of darkness and fear. Life under such a regime was stripped of all freedom and individuality. The massive attack on the Catholic Church began the era of persecution and martyrdom. People were fleeing to Hong Kong including my parents who hoped to start a new life for us there. However, after 1951 the Communists sealed all exits; my two brothers and I were left behind. Gone was my safe haven! I was then six, my oldest brother, the care-giver, was only sixteen and my other brother was ten. Despite our misery, God was there to care for us through our generous and loving relatives who, notwithstanding their misery, sheltered us and provided for our existential needs.

The Church being under surveillance, faith practices became really challenging and dangerous. I witnessed the invincible faith of my people whose courage to walk in the footsteps of Christ led them to the concentration camps and prisons. It made me understand, early in life, that without faith, life is meaningless but with faith, no one can strip away your inner peace, freedom, hope and joy even in the midst of persecution! Catholics lived fully the Beatitudes. My brothers and I witnessed the arrest of our dear Bishop, the late Cardinal Kung. That was a symbolic moment that marked me for life. It deepened my understanding of what it means to follow Christ and to carry his cross. Perhaps this was the beginning of my desire to consecrate my life to Christ.

TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

God has a way of making the impossible, possible. It was September 1957, with the help of our relatives we grabbed an unusual opportunity and made our exodus to Hong Kong. Who were the first people to welcome us? They were the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception! In retrospect, I understand this was not an accidental encounter; ahead of time, God was preparing the way for me to be a part of the prophetic dream of Venerable Delia. Ten years later, His Will was manifested—I joyfully said YES to Him and accepted to work in his vineyard with the MIC Sisters!

VISITING MY ORIGINS

In 1981, I returned to Shanghai for the first time. I was so deeply saddened to see my people living in a greater state of misery. Shanghai was in a dilapidated state. Most of the Churches had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution or were being used as markets and camps. My parish, St. Peter's Church, had become a museum. It made me want to cry, because the people were walking in darkness with no hope in their heart. All my cousins who had suffered from the Cultural Revolution returned home physically sick, uneducated and unprepared to enter into the work field.

I visited many Catholics who had suffered long term imprisonment and were then released. What touched me most was that no one complained about their suffering, everyone was serene and at peace. Blessed, indeed, are the poor in spirit, the humble of heart and the persecuted for Christ's sake, the Kingdom of God is in their heart! God never left his people despite years of desolation! I walked away with mixed feelings—joy and pain.

SHANGHAI TODAY

Like a Phoenix rising from its ashes, Shanghai has risen to a new reality! Oct. 2007, fifty years after my departure from Shanghai, I returned for a second visit. Within a period of twenty six years, Shanghai has climbed to the top of the world with its incredible new glory. Again, China has welcomed the West to assist in its rebirth. Globalization has somehow reached China, especially Shanghai. It has raised the standard of living and has given hope to the people. My relatives are no longer suffering; most of them have a reasonably comfortable standard of living. Churches are being restored even if they are still under restrictions. The number of believers is increasing each year, priesthood and religious vocations are on the rise. When I visited my parish, St. Peter's Church, I was surprised to attend an English Mass where westerners and Filipinos join the local Chinese in celebrating the Eucharist. Yesterday's memories came like flashbacks. The seeds of faith, sown yesterday, are still bearing fruits through those who have survived persecution; they continue to pass on the Holy Fire of God's Love to other thirsty hearts! How long will this last? The future will tell!

THE DIOCESE OF SHANGHAI —400TH ANNIVERSARY

We could say that Quebec and Shanghai are twin dioceses. Both were founded in the same year by French missionaries and celebrated their 400th Anniversary of Foundation in 2008. No wonder I felt at home when I joined the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception; it seemed there was already a sense of belonging to the 'déjà vu'!

[1] Cecilia with her brothers
[2] Cecilia with her aunts
[3] Cecilia in Shanghai
Photos credit: MIC

A touching Pilgrimage

A few years after their arrival in Canton, China—1909, the MIC Sisters are given the responsibility of a leprosarium in Shek Lung (Shilong). They accept to give medical care to the women, providing relief from pain and reducing wounds. This excerpt taken from the book* Women Without Frontiers *brings back to mind our dedicated pioneers. In 2002 and 2007 I had the privilege of going to the leprosarium near Canton, China. For me, this visit truly became a unique pilgrimage. It is not without emotions that I relate the story.

By **Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

EN ROUTE...

Marie-Thérèse Beaudette, M.I.C., Lucia Leung, M.I.C., Nicole Rochon, lay missionary, and myself set-off from Hong Kong on our way to Canton. There, Chinese friends are waiting for us to organize the trip to Shek Hap (30 kilometres from Canton) where the lepers are located. In this region, leprosy is still taboo; therefore, in a friendly manner we try to convince two young taxi drivers to drive us there.

> Visitors rarely come to this small village.

With our supply of fruits, dry cereals, soaps, toothpaste tubes, clothing for men and women, plenty of precious tobacco (their only leisure), we embark and are driven to our destination. The hot scorching sun follows us through the towns and villages to finally reach the isolated countryside. The road becomes more and more bumpy. A shaky narrow bridge must be crossed and our young drivers wonder: ***Should we roll over this bridge? It is risky...*** Reassured by a local Chinese, we cautiously dare cross over. The obstacle is now behind us and there is a sigh of relief.

WHEN EMOTIONS TAKE OVER

From afar we see the leprosarium. All whitewashed, it appears as the Lord's dwelling place. Yes, the Lord is very much present in these humble ones! Upon hearing the purring motors of the cars, men and women stagger out of their shelter. They warmly greet us with applause, laughter and dance. Visitors rarely come to this small village. I cannot help but shed tears as I smile and speak to them.

A HAPPY REUNION

The patients recognize Sr. Marie-Thérèse and Sr. Lucia who had been coming for many years to visit them and bring them comfort in their isolation. They relate how the kind Fr. Ma had passed away. Father Ma had been their protector for decades. Now, they have two guardian angels, that is, two young Chinese nuns who both have the same name—Theresa. The time has come for us to distribute the goods to each one; they, in turn, express much gratitude. Then we visit those who are unable to leave their small rooms. Some are hard-of-hearing and blind, we must touch them to signal our presence. We offer them fruits which they feel with their hands and receive with joy. A patient comes to Sr. Marie-Thérèse to thank her for the money she had given him for his leg amputation. He is now much better.

[1] Sr. Marie Thérèse Beaudette and a sick lady
[2] Lepers and Father Ma
Photos credit: MIC
[3] Shek Lung Leprosarium, 1913
Photo credit: Archives MIC

1

2

3

His suffering is over! We notice that five years after our last visit, many are no longer there.

AN INNER JOY

With much attention, we listen to each one's story. Sr. Lucia translates the core of the conversation: they have so much to say! Father Ma's name is mentioned many times. He had catechized and baptized them; this is the reason why their heavenly joy is deeply rooted in their hearts. Before our departure, they sing in Mandarin; we then bid farewell to each one. As we drive away, no one speaks.

Deeply touched by what we saw and heard, this encounter with the poor of Yahweh had us remain in a reflective mood.

NOTE: Leprosy or the Hansen's Disease is a chronic infection that affects the peripheral nerves and mucosa of the upper respiratory tract; skin lesions are the primary external symptom. If left untreated, it can be progressive causing permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes. The transmission of the disease can come from prolonged close contact, by nasal droplets and saliva. Otherwise, leprosy is unlikely to be contagious; however, it was incurable for a very long time. In the past, society demanded that the lepers be excluded and grouped together in leprosariums. Effective cure and complete recovery of the disease did not come before the 1960s. Today, the disease still exists. As of November 30, 2007 statistics reveal that 500,000 cases of leprosy were registered in China between the years 1950-2002. Currently, 6,000 cases are active and 2,000 new cases are detected and registered each year; many are not registered due to the fact the disease is ignored. (http://wikipedia.org/wiki/leprosy in China)

Letters from here and abroad

Sr. Josette Augustin, Provincial Superior in Haiti, shares with us a letter of gratitude which was addressed to her.

To each and every MIC Sister the world over and in Haiti,

I come to express my heartfelt gratitude for all you have been and have done for me. I have not been a simple employee, as a driver for 34 years, but I have been, still am, and always will be a member of your MIC family.

My story is blended with yours. I have shared your joys and sufferings; you have shared mine. When my first wife passed away after an automobile accident on the road to Jacmel, I deeply experienced the love you have for my children and for me. Dedicated to the service of evangelization, you are well connected to the human realities. You saw me alone with my children, orphaned of their mother, and you helped me discover the Maternal and Paternal Love of God. He placed on my route a new companion, Marie-Anna and she has become my spouse and mother of my children.

When I had reached 25 years of service, the Congregation and the Province of Haiti celebrated me as one of their own. We were the lay people you adopted and welcomed into your great family.

The time has now come for us to move on, and we are obliged to leave Haiti; our destination is Canada. It is your country which offers us this possibility, so that our children may have a higher education; our dear Haiti is still not capable of keeping all her children. Soon we will leave our beloved country, hoping to always be at its service, according to the means that will be given us by Providence.

We will never forget Haiti. We will never forget our spiritual family, the MIC Sisters, our benefactors forever. We have learned to appreciate and admire your dedication, your love of the little ones, your love of Haiti and your courage before all adversities. We have seen the development of the MIC Province in Haiti; numerous Haitian vocations are gradually blooming. A new generation is following in your footsteps, offering to our people religious women so much needed in our society, and keeping alive the beautiful MIC charisma.

We are leaving, but you will always be present in our prayers and in our hearts. Thank you for everything. God bless you and be with you always.

In gratitude and friendship,
Helcius Jolicoeur

(photo: 2nd row, 1st to the right)

YOU ARE *MY WITNESSES*

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!

PAULINE BOILARD, M.I.C. (to the right)
Lyster, Quebec

Very interested in the inter-religious peace dialogue, Sr. Pauline has responded to a call from the Director of the Biblical and Archeological School in Jerusalem. Besides being secretary, she acts as mentor to students who are completing their academic studies.

GISÈLE LEDUC, M.I.C. (to the left)
Granby, Quebec

Having served eighteen years as general bursar of the Institute, Sr. Gisèle has returned to her former mission country, Malawi, Africa. While being provincial bursar, she also assists those who are in the administration field and shares with them her knowledge.

DITMA LUZ TROCIO, M.I.C.
Baroy, Lanao del Norte, Philippines

For many years, Sr. Ditma was accountant-secretary in Taiwan. Besides her expertise in that area, she has also been a vibrant promoter of mission awareness in the Philippines. She has now arrived in Canada where she will work for the MIC Missionary Press as a promoter of the MIC Mission News magazine.

LORNA F. ERICKSON, M.I.C.
Mambajao, Camiguin, Philippines

Sr. Lorna has worked with emigrants in Taiwan and is now called to a new mission in Vietnam. She is currently studying the language, the culture of her new milieu and analyzing the possibility of a new insertion for the MIC Community.

Your departure gifts help our missionaries

Enclosed, the amount of $ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Province/Country: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: ( ) _____

Do you want a tax receipt? YES ❑ NO ❑

Send to:

MISSION PROCURE
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
121 Maplewood Avenue
Montreal, QC Canada H2V 2M2
Phone: (514) 274-5691

Thank you for your solidarity!

Dawn of a New Life

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

Délia Tétreault

Lucille Michaud, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marie-André) 1923-2008
Plessisville, Quebec

Lucille was the fourth child of a family of 19 children. The Holy Childhood Association deeply inspired her to become a missionary. At 21, she entered the MIC Congregation. A remarkable seamstress, her talent was well appreciated in Chicoutimi, Vancouver and Montreal. In 1950, during the Holy Year, her parents were chosen for a trip to Rome which ended in a tragedy; both died in the plane crash at Mount Obiou. To this burden was added another trial, that of multiple sclerosis. Serenely, Sr. Lucille accepted her illness and the Will of God; she demonstrated gratitude at all times.

Jeannette Fanfan, M.I.C.
1942-2008
Chantal, Haiti

The eldest of six children, Jeannette had the opportunity of receiving a good education. At 23, she joined the MIC Sisters in the City of Port-au-Prince. In the field of education, she taught, directed schools and also coordinated a network between all the MIC schools in Haiti. Later, Sr. Jeannette served within the general and provincial administration. She then experienced mission life in Malawi, Africa, where she worked for the promotion of women. Having returned to Haiti, she courageously suffered from ailments; her sudden death shocked many. Sr. Jeannette had a well fulfilled life in His Service.

Alma Couture, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Clovis) 1927-2008
Saint Sabine, Bellechasse, Quebec

At a very young age, Alma discovered the joy of giving and helping others. When her studies were completed and after a retreat, she decided to enter the MIC Institute, she was then 22. Her training years over, she was sent to Rome and then Madagascar where she taught Domestic Science. After 36 years of dedication on the Great Red Island, Sr. Alma came back to Quebec where she worked 10 years for the Missionary Press. Her life threatening illness never discouraged her; she heroically accepted the Will of God. We will long remember her faith and courage.

Claire Préville, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte-Clémence) 1912-2008
Saint-Alphonse-Rodriguez, Quebec

Claire, the last born of eleven children, soon developed a special devotion to Mary. She was eleven years old when she felt attracted to the religious and missionary life. After attending many retreats, Claire decided to enter the MIC Institute. Her first years were dedicated to community services at the Mother House, Outremont. She then went to Rimouski and Nominingue. An excellent educator, she spent many years teaching in Haiti. Upon her return to Canada, Sr. Claire loved being a promoter of our magazines: *Le Précurseur/ MIC Mission News*. She also gave private courses in mathematics. A serene and peaceful woman, Sr. Claire quietly passed away. Her dedicated life remains, for us, a source of inspiration.

Délia Hears Us

With some MIC companions, Sr. Suzanne Labelle strives to introduce Venerable Délia Tétreault to groups of people interested in knowing more about the Foundress. The content of her presentation: Délia's life, her dream, her foundation, her spirituality which is focused on Thanksgiving. Having been declared Venerable in 1997, a miracle is now required by the Church for her beatification and another one for her canonization.

To obtain special favours, we invite the faithful to pray God through her intercession. Délia hears us... She is a model and a heroic personality for our time.

Somewhat like Saint Therese of Lisieux who never left the Carmel, yet was proclaimed the patron saint of the missions; Délia, a Quebecer, never left Quebec but nevertheless gave rise to mission oriented works here and abroad. Thanks to her, the first missionary institute of women in America came to be in 1902. It was the beginning of a great missionary movement for generations to come. In 1961, there was approximately 5000 French Canadian missionaries, of which 3000 were women, already at work overseas; an expansion which placed Quebec 4th among Catholic countries sending missionaries abroad.

To know more about Délia Tétreault and her works, you are invited to read *Women Without Frontiers by Chantal Gauthier (Editions Carte Blanche, 2008).*

If a favor is granted, please write to:
Sr. Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.
Office of the Délia Tétreault Cause
100 Place Juge Desnoyers
Laval, QC H7G 1A4

This magazine pleases you?

To spread joy and hope; to learn more about the Christian values; to discover mission facts expressed in modern day language...

Pass it on... It's more than a magazine, it's a mission!

❑ ***I subscribe***
❑ ***I renew my subscription***

❑ ***I subscribe a relative / friend***

In Canada	❑ 1 year:	$12
	❑ 2 years:	$22
	❑ 3 years:	$30

In the USA	❑ 1 year:	$18
Other countries	❑ 1 year:	$25

Please make your check payable to: ***MIC Mission News***

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____

Country: _____ Postal Code: _____ Phone: ( ) _____

INFORMATION:

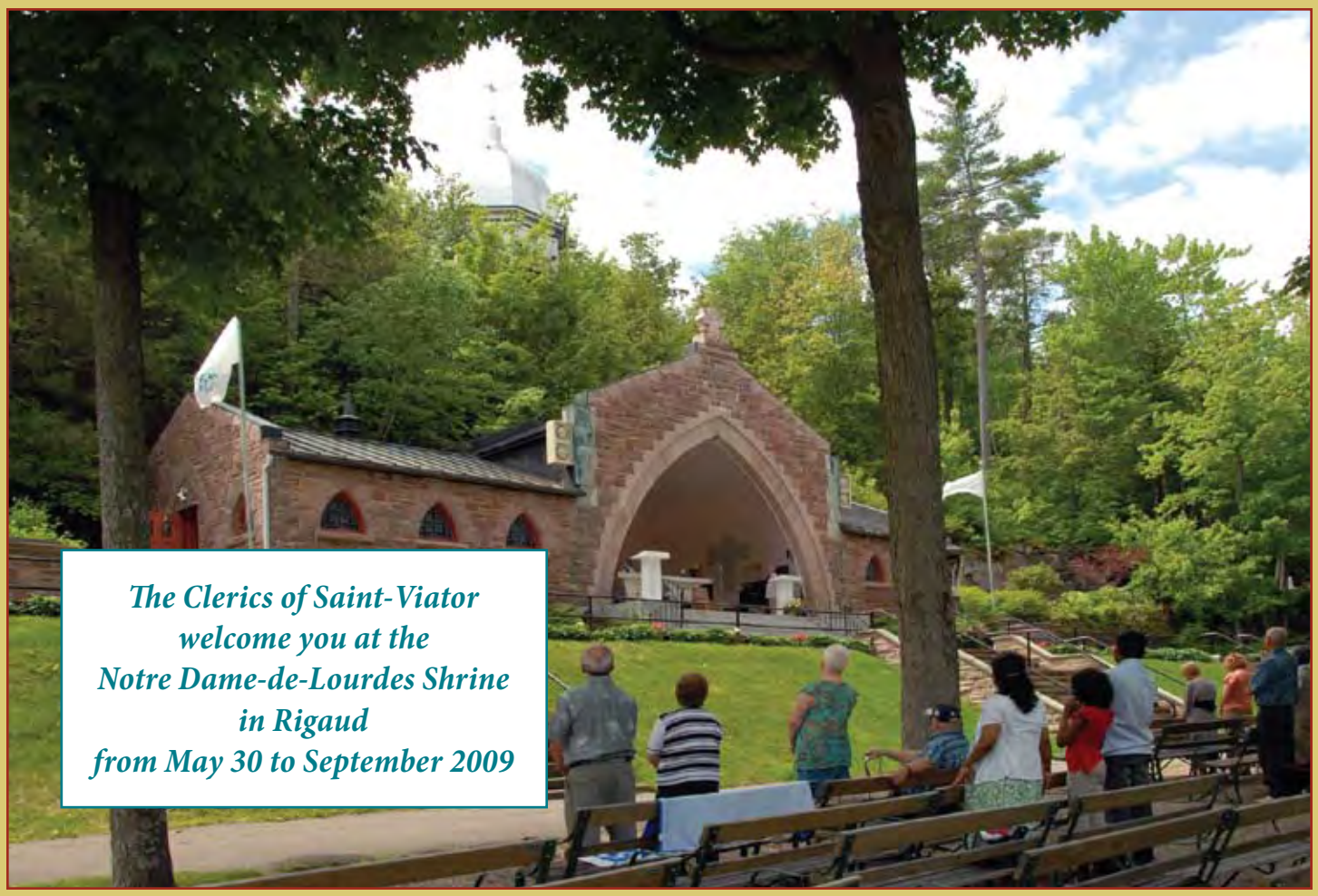
Phone: (450) 663-6460 #5305

E-mail: micmissionnews@pressemic.org

Web site: www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

MAILING ADDRESS:

MIC MISSION NEWS
120 Place Juge Desnoyers
Laval, Quebec
Canada H7G 1A4



MIC Mission News ***thanks its sponsors and its donating members for their generous contributions.***

✦ TO PURCHASE ADVERTISING SPACE ✦

Carole Guévin : (450) 663-6460 #5303 ✦ micmissionnews@pressemic.org

MISSION PROCURE
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
121 Maplewood Avenue
Montreal, QC
Canada H2V 2M2

Phone:
(514) 274-5691

Fax:
(514) 274-3298

Email:
generalat.mic@bellnet.ca

Thank you
for your generosity!

Three Ways to Help Our Missionaries

BEQUESTS IN YOUR WILL

LIFE ANNUITIES

✓ Provide you with a life long income; enable you to reduce your taxes; provide you with a way to help our missionaries effectively.

LIFE INSURANCE

It is a capital paid after your death by your insurance company.

✓ Allows you to help generously without prejudice to the interests of your family. Your contribution, in the form of insurance premiums, is deductible from your taxable revenue as a charitable donation.

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Province/Country: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: ( ) _____

Haute Fidélité

Hi Fi

Official Publication of the Catholic Church of Montreal

The ideal magazine to enrich your faith and support your involvement in Church communities.

Hi Fi explores fundamental themes of the Christian faith: the challenges of proposing Jesus Christ in our world, the Bible, history, theology... *Hi Fi* approaches contemporary issues in a creative and refreshing perspective.

Subscription: $35 - Five issues
Discover *Hi Fi* online and contact us to subscribe.

www.diocesemontreal.org/hf • 514-925-4300 ext. 250

spiritours
voyages de ressourcement

Soulful journeys — Pilgrimages — Personnal development
Spiritual walk — Equitable tourism — International solidarity

ISRAEL: HOLY LAND
"The Living Word on the footsteps of Jesus"
April 20 to May 2, 09

NEW YORK
"Easter retreat for young adults (18-35 y.o.)"
April 9 to 12, 09

ENGLAND
"Roots of English spirituality"
April 18 to May 2, 09

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA
"Walking humbly with your God"
May 1 to 23, Sept. 4 to 26, 09

SOUTH OF ITALY
"On the footsteps of St-Paul"
May 5-14, 09

CHARLEVOIX
"Father, I abandon myself to you"
June 26 to 28, 09

THE MONASTERY TRAIL IN FRANCE
"Opening up to the Source"
July 3 to 16, 09

Contact us to receive our free brochure!
Personalized group tours

(514) **374-7965** | (866) **331-7965** (toll free)
www.spiritours.com

ALAIN LAMONTAGNE, D.D.
DENTURIST

Makes, fits, repairs dentures

3168, boul. Cartier
Chomedey, Laval (Qc)
H7V 1J7

Tel.: (450) 682-0907

Office day and night

JACQUES GUÉVIN
PHARMACIEN

195 Principale, St-Damase (QC) J0H 1J0
Tél.: (450) 797-2110

Pharmacie affiliée à Proxim

coopdesign
communications graphiques

info@coopdesign.ca
514 272 0557 | 514 258 0557

LES SYSTÈMES DE SÉCURITÉ
Ultrateck
2003 INC.

Daniel Hurtubise

59, Rue des Souverains, Blainville (Québec) J7C 5P5
securiteultrateck@bellnet.ca

Cell.: (514) 712-4002
Tél. : (450) 434-4001
Fax : (450) 434-4075

PRINTED IN CANADA
PP40064029 R11020

Mary Our Lady of China

Virgin Most Holy,
Mother of the Incarnate Word
and our Mother,
the entire Church in China
looks to you with devout affection.

Look upon the People of God
and with a mother's care,
guide them along the paths
of truth and love,
so that they may always be
a leaven of harmonious
coexistence among all citizens.

Sustain all those in China,
who, amid their daily trials,
continue to believe, to hope, to love.

Amen!

Excerpt: Pope Benedict's Marian Prayer
May 24, 2008
Day of Prayer for the Church of China