

MIC

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MISSION NEWS



To sow seeds of joy and hope



HAITI

UNEXPECTED
REUNION

CANADA

SPIRITUAL
ODYSSEY

YES, I HAVE DREAMT!



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

JULY

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
AN URBAN CULTURE ROOTED IN
JUSTICE, SOLIDARITY AND PEACE
*May Christians living in urban
centers strive to effectively promote
justice, solidarity and peace.*

AUGUST

FOR ALL VICTIMS OF
DISCRIMINATION, HUNGER
AND FORCED EMIGRATION
*May the Church be a home for all
people and open its doors to those
who suffer from racial or religious
discrimination, hunger or war.*

SEPTEMBER

FOR THE END OF WAR
*May believers open their hearts to
love in an effort to put an end to
war and conflict in the world.*

MASSES FOR READERS' INTENTIONS OFFERED IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

January: *Canada*

February: *Cuba*

March: *Philippines*

April: *Haiti*

May: *Canada*

June: *Bolivia*

July: *Malawi and Zambia*

August: *Hong Kong and Taiwan*

September: *Madagascar*

October: *Peru*

November: *Japan*

December: *Canada*



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EDITORIAL

Audacious Dreams

Délia Tétreault dreamed of a field of ripe wheat that extended as far as the eye could see. Suddenly all the spikelets of wheat changed into the heads of children. From this prophetic and from the real dream Délia's heart was opened to the world. From its beginning, the Institute has kept this dream alive, giving hands and feet to Christ's Mission in many countries of the world.

The fulfillment of a dream requires audacity, dynamism, perseverance, and above all belief in the project. Délia had to overcome many difficulties and rise to the challenges. She believed in her mission, she was convinced it was inspired.

How many times I have admired those young audacious researchers on the Discovery Program. They take up the serious challenges and persevere in the work that fascinates them. They discover, imagine, create and analyze new possibilities concerning science, health, environment, technology... always with the goal of serving humanity. To our incredulous eyes, they seem to push their knowledge beyond the limits of science fiction to make possible the impossible. The world needs these great dreamers.

These dreamers are audacious from their early childhood years. They see beyond the ordinary and their hearts pulsate in response to everything that is around them. Examples? Brother André! His sensitive feelings for human suffering inspired him to entrust the sick, who came to visit him, to Saint Joseph and thus an oratory was built in his honor. Today, this pilgrimage site attracts thousands of pilgrims. When the earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince, young people around the world thought of ways to help the youth in Haiti. Many schools organized walk-a-thons. As a fund-raiser activity, a seven year old took the initiative of skating round a rink for as long as she could in order to help the Haitian children. These youngsters are the hope of the future.

Yes, I have dreamt... But, not only must I dream, I must make my dreams real, bring them to their fulfillment. Our childhood dreams, as well as our adult dreams can be realized. *Yes, I have dreamt...* with eyes wide open and heart in hand! This is how we draw on our dynamism, with others who are building a new humanity.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

DRAW:

**SOUVENIR FROM
MADAGASCAR**

The lucky winner is
Mrs. Edith Bouchard,
Petite-Rivière-Saint-François, QC

Congratulations!

NEXT DRAW:

**A MAGNIFICENT
STATUETTE**

**THE VIRGIN MARY
OF SHANGHAI**

Each new subscription
or each renewal to
the MIC Mission News
entitles you to this draw.
Your support is greatly
appreciated.

We wish you good luck!



YES, I HAVE DREAMT

"To dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe, to bear with unbearable sorrow, to run where the brave dare not go... This is my quest..." The Impossible Dream written by Joe Darion tells us that no matter how difficult it can be, dreams, like yeast, can raise humanity.



By André Gadbois



When I was 12—the backstreet that had become a skating rink or a football field made me dream of friendship, victory, solidarity with the “gang” somewhat like the Hebrews in the desert. When I was 15—the Boy Scout promise made me dream of world fellowship and a huge camp fire to celebrate the boys and

girls around the world, walking together to reach a goal. When I was 25—I dreamt of a society without social classes, without slums, without contempt, where each person cares for the other. When I reached 40—I dreamt of a school system where children with physical disabilities would be accepted and supported with

tenderness and imagination. I am now 60 and I evaluate my dreams... I realize that I still have a long way to go before they are completely fulfilled. Yes, I have dreamt, and I continue dreaming of a world where no one would have to beg or bend under the weight of misery. I persist in dreaming and believing in community organizations which arise from the inspired visions of artists and artisans.

DREAMS INTERCONNECT US

There are illusions (wealth, physical beauty, power, glory, growth...). There are dreams (bread for all humanity, jobs for everyone, equitable sharing, brotherhood and solidarity, reconciliation, justice...). The illusions serve an elite group and lead to fierce competition, while dreams interconnect us. Perhaps when I was small I was a vivid dreamer... and still today I walk alongside the dreamers; I look at the distant horizon which lacks clarity but nevertheless mobilizes hearts in favor of the Kingdom; I side with those projects that are not easy nor profitable but opened to all without the usual bidding. The dreams of Martin Luther King, of Father Pierre, of Délia Tétreault, of Jean Vanier, of Jesus of Nazareth were not finished products well wrapped and tied together as would say today's technocrats in managerial positions. Rather, they were in the field sowing seeds of change. They were audacious people; nourished by a deep spiritual life of contemplation, they emerged with strength. They took on men and women of good-will, they relieved all types of misery, they were transparent—they did not conceal the trappings of any kind, they were true liberators for all, they helped people live with dignity.

HE RESISTED FALSEHOOD

The authors of the Book of Exodus present Yahweh in such a way that we can hear God say to his enslaved people: *I see the misery of my People and I cry. This is not the dream I had for you. This is not why I have created you; I have not created you to have a miserable life.* God communicated His dream to Moses who, at first,

resisted taking up such a challenge. But then he led God's people out of slavery while they, in turn, grumbled on their way to the Promised Land. Afterwards, seeing the peoples' irrational behaviors, circumventing the Great Dream, the prophets cried out with anger and denounced the vendors of illusions who looked only after their own success.

¹ GADBOIS, Thérèse, letter to her brother André, Diane, Marie-Claude and Jean-Philippe

¹ Amy Cat Tien Ho, 10 months
Photo Credit: H. Fontaine, M.I.C.

Jesus' dream was not a finished product well wrapped and tied up.

From within this small unimportant group of people came forth a Man who did not follow the tendencies of the society (power, glory, success...). He reversed the established patterns, denounced hypocritical actions; He spoke about the Great Dream of His Father and called people to conversion in order to live God's Dream. He wrapped a towel around His waist and washed His disciples' feet, He emphasized that after His departure He would send a powerful Energy capable of transforming us and sending us forth as liberators of the Truth. Jesus did not hold on to success. To His companions who were bewildered upon seeing the huge crowd of hungry people, He said: *You give them something to eat!* (Mt 14:16). After His resurrection, on the road to Emmaus and the breaking of the bread with the two disciples, He remained faithful to Himself—He disappeared so that they could capture what they had just witnessed and then continue on. This is the mark of the dreamer who I love and in whom I put all my trust! *Hope is knowing that things take shape in the here and now and that they will not happen without us; it is knowing that in the long run the many steps to reach the goal are not considered as unnecessary detours or time lost. To accomplish God's project, we sometimes have to leave the familiar place, break the daily routine; leave one's country, like Abraham, and go towards the unknown land with the sole guarantee of God's Word as compass.*¹ 

THE CARPENTER'S DOORKEEPER

The humble doorkeeper, Alfred Bessette, better known as Brother André, never thought that his small oratory dedicated to Saint Joseph and built in 1927 would attract millions of pilgrims from around the world.



By Marie-Paule
Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Why do they come? For various reasons: to receive healing from the famous miracle-worker, to be spiritually comforted or to be granted a special favor from Saint Joseph. Others come to the sanctuary out of curiosity or as tourists. No matter the motivation, the Lord is there waiting for each one.

WHO IS BROTHER ANDRÉ?

Ninth of a family of twelve children, Alfred was born on August 9, 1845 at Saint-Grégoire, a small village located forty kilometers south-east of Montreal. He was a sickly boy and short in stature. At the age of twelve he was orphaned of both parents; his maternal aunt, Rosalie Foisy-Nadeau took care of him. After working as a baker and cobbler, he lived in the United States from 1863-1867. There, he learned to speak English even though he had little education—he could hardly

sign his name. In 1867 he came back to Quebec and lived with the parish priest in Farnham. Many times he visited the pastor of Saint-Césaire who introduced him to the Holy Cross Congregation presenting him as a saint for the community. Alfred was twenty-five.

On December 8, 1870, Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph patron of the universal Church. That same year, Alfred, a novice, chose the name of André in honor of the pastor of Saint Césaire Parish—Joseph André Provençal. Considering his frail health, people would say of him: *If this young man becomes incapable of working, he will at least know how to pray well.* He was appointed as doorkeeper at Notre-Dame College; with humor, Brother André would say: *They pointed the door to me!* He kept his post for forty years. Apart from his full-time duty, he tackled all the odd jobs and was known as a *jack-of-all-trades*.

A COMPASSIONATE AND ATTENTIVE MAN

As doorkeeper, he was in contact with many people who spontaneously confided to him their illnesses and their sufferings. His attentiveness, his compassion and fervent prayer life won the hearts of the visitors; people came in droves to see him. His reputation as being a saintly brother spread rapidly. However, he encountered difficulties with the authorities of the College who qualified him as a *charlatan*. He was asked to stop receiving visitors at the College—instead, he was to meet them at the streetcar stop. Brother André would bring his visitors to pray in front of a statue of Saint Joseph and would give them a medal of the Saint. He had a profound devotion for the humble carpenter Joseph and his dream was to build him a little chapel where people could be heard and granted special graces. Archbishop Paul Bruchési gave him the authorization.

Brother André was fifty-nine when his modest oratory took shape on Mount Royal. The surprising number of healings which occurred there made him a popular hero. However, he firmly denied being the healer; he always attributed the healings to God and Saint Joseph, the intercessor. The renowned sanctuary grew, extending its fame beyond boundaries. Wednesday, January 6, 1937 at fifty-five minutes past midnight, Brother André passed away. He was ninety-one.

SAINT BROTHER ANDRÉ

Since the year 1941, members of the Holy Cross Community have multiplied their efforts for Brother André to be declared holy by the Church. In 1960, the process for his beatification began. The Ecclesiastical Tribunal in charge of the proceedings opened Brother André's tomb on September 11, 1963. His body was intact, in a state of mummification. In 1978, Pope Paul VI declared him *Venerable* and on May 23, 1982 Pope John Paul II beatified him. *Blessed* Brother André Besette will be canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 17, 2010. He will be the second saint from Quebec recognized by

Rome after Saint Marguerite d'Youville, Foundress of the Sisters of Charity who was canonized in 1990.

SAINT JOSEPH'S ORATORY TODAY...

From its hilltop, overlooking Montreal, the Oratory sends its blessings to the population of this large City. Some are touched while others go about their daily routine indifferent to what is happening on the hilltop. When pilgrims set foot on these holy grounds, they are struck by the warmth of this prayerful environment.

At the wax museum, we see Brother André, as in his time, at his desk welcoming the pilgrims with graciousness; his penetrating and compassionate gaze seems to tell us: *What do you want to ask through Saint Joseph's intercession?* In this environment we feel confident. In the large hallway dedicated to Saint Joseph, thousands of votive lights burn surrounded by human and spiritual warmth. So many secrets are hidden in these little flames. Their role is to be an intercessory presence before Saint Joseph, the foster father of Jesus.

Saint Joseph's Oratory is a holy place of gathering, of prayer, of blessings; it is part and parcel of our Canadian heritage. Its presence on Mount Royal reminds us that life is not limited to a race of earthly glories. Saint Brother André would say: *All little things done for the love of God and neighbor transform life into beauty and greatness.* The Oratory is truly a paradox: In spite of its imposing site and gigantic construction, it extols humility and simplicity as in the life of Saint Joseph, its holy patron and of Brother André, its saint and humble founder. ☺

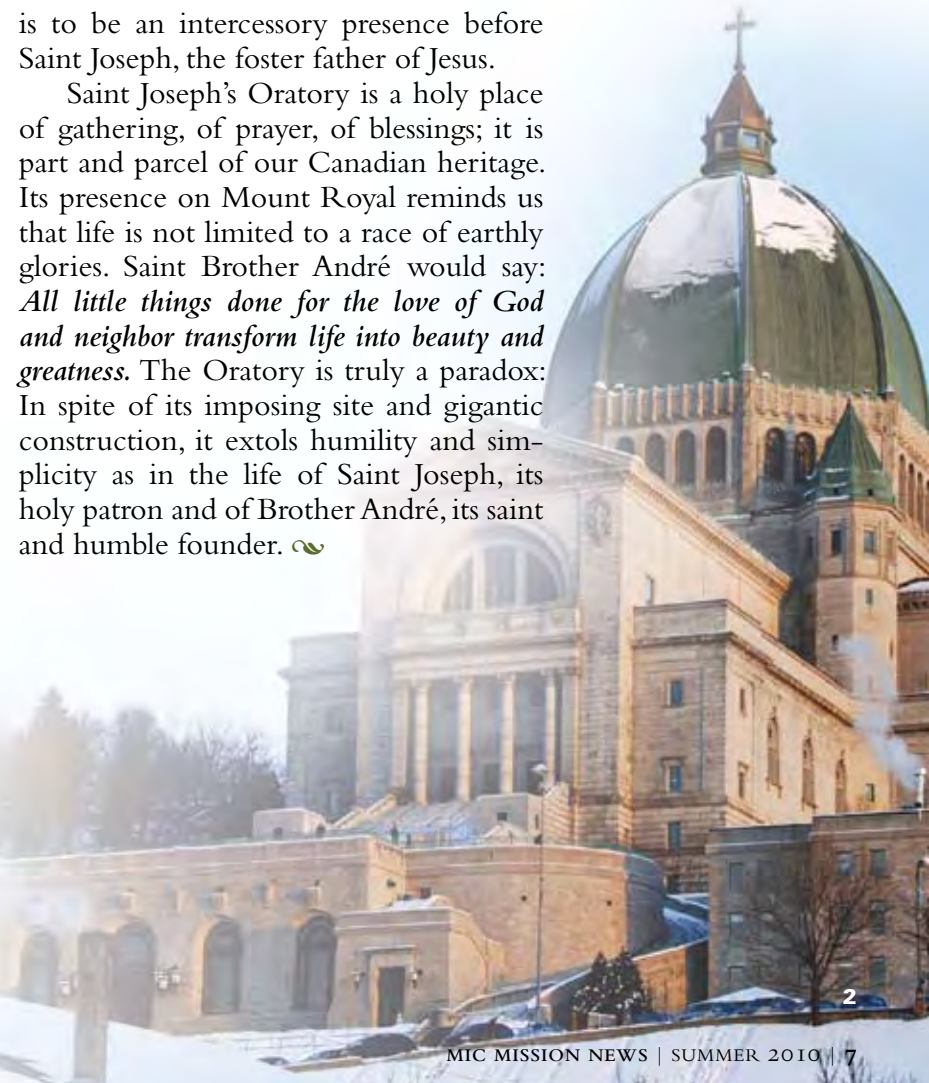
¹ Statue of Brother André

Photo Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

² Saint Joseph's Oratory

Photo: iStock



A REALITY THAT HURTS

MIC Mission News, October-December 2006: Sister Mona Henry, M.I.C. wrote an article—From the Virtual to the Real. The author described a dream that became a project and reality—building a primary and secondary school which opened its doors to 800 students. The Institute Mother Délia (IMD) at Port-au-Prince, Haiti,... is it still standing?

By Cécile Ménard, M.I.C.

January 12, 2010, the devastating earthquake took Haiti by surprise. Newspapers, T.V. news, E-mails were all focused on that small country which has been striving for decades to find its place among the nations. What tears and desolation in face of such a tragedy! Since that day, life has gradually resumed but deep pain remains.

A DREAM HAS VANISHED

Our Haitian Sisters had dreamt of this primary and secondary school as a response to a pressing need of the surrounding population. They wanted to give the youth the very best of education so as to equip them for a better future. The project was also a response to their wish—becoming economically independent as an MIC Province in Haiti; receiving salaries for their professional services would fulfill this wish.

So many benefactors invested in the project. People in the neighborhood gave cement bags, iron bars, transportation and manpower. Added to this solidarity was the financial support of generous donors from Canada and elsewhere. With joy, people saw the school being built and children attending classes. But now, what has become of the dream?



Sr. Josette Augustin, M.I.C., Provincial Superior of the mission of Haiti writes:

The situation in which we have been living since the earthquake is indescribable. Human distress, countless victims,... the Catholic Church has been hit hard. Yet, our faith, our conviction of not being alone, our unshakable trust in the Risen Lord help us to be resilient and turn to the future. Our wholehearted gratitude goes to all the people who have manifested their solidarity during this difficult time. We are well aware of the great number of individuals who have been deployed to rescue us. A striking solidarity is seen in our country; many families have welcomed the stricken population in their homes or on their piece of land.

The MIC Sisters have not remained indifferent before the anguish of their brothers and sisters in distress. At Delmas, approximately 250 victims took shelter on our grounds. We collaborated with a Protestant Minister whose temple and schools were completely destroyed; we welcomed him and his faithful to lodge at our place and celebrate the Sunday service. Our courtyard was full of survivors and wounded, many of whom have died. At our Main House, approximately 50 individuals took refuge on our piece of land. With limited resources and the generosity of other people we were able to help those who came to us. We experienced what it is like to sleep outdoors, without tents, and two weeks later with tents which were placed near the victims.



We who have survived this earthquake often ask ourselves: why are we still alive? It is truly a miracle! God wants to entrust us with a mission. It is imperative for each one of us to search through this painful reality how we can be God's instruments and respond to the needs of the injured persons, bruised by that terrible earthquake.

The Lord has given us a second life, a second chance. We are called to make it fruitful for the good of all. The January 12 event obliges us to have a new vision for our country, for the MIC Province. In the media, we speak of a possible re-foundation of Haiti; we believe it is urgent to build a better life for ourselves. Many friendly countries offer us that opportunity, but it is up to us to take our destiny in hand together with the collaboration of those who want to help us.

As consecrated women, may we hear the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and discern what the Lord expects of us in our lives as baptized Christians and for the well-being of our country.

HOLDING ON

The school is still standing...However, the primary section has so many deep cracks that it has been deemed unsafe. The auditorium and a section of the Sisters' quarters, notably the chapel, which served for the Sunday service to hundreds of Catholics, have been badly damaged.

Recently, our General Superior, Sr. Louise Denis and the General Vicar,

Sr. Lucie Gagné who oversees the MIC Province of Haiti, went to investigate the damages. In agreement with our Haitian Sisters and according to the government's new building codes, they have decided to take up the challenge. IMD will be solidified and the elementary section will be rebuilt.

On April the 5th, all classes resumed in tents supplied by UNICEF. Many children were relocated in other regions. The Sisters and students are still in shock and remain traumatized by what they experienced and saw...the collapse of rooftops and concrete walls. Actually, it's the concrete walls that killed many Haitians.

A TOUCHING GENEROSITY

It is with deep gratitude that we highlight the generous donations we received by many of our benefactors. With grieving yet hopeful hearts, we have begun demolishing those areas that have been badly damaged. We are persuaded that all of you are one with us as we undertake the arduous task of re-construction. With Sr. Mona, we are convinced that *investing in a school means building a country* (MIC Mission News, Oct.-Dec. 2006). More than ever, the Institute Mother Delia responds to the needs of a nation whose great hope is to walk securely into the future. ♡

¹ Debris of the school

² Sr. Josette welcomes the children on the school ground

³ Sisters distribute food to the earthquake victims

⁴ Debris of the chapel walls

Photos Credit: L. Gagné, M.I.C.

Young Hearts Respond

By Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

GIVING HANDS AND FEET TO GOD'S TENDERNESS

The horrible earthquake that shook Haiti moved many to tears. Artists, from various countries, organized fund-raising concerts, governments took action, companies and individuals from all walks of life dug into their pockets or bank accounts to help this devastated country. Hearing the cry of distress, peoples reached out and tried to bring some relief. God always waits that we give hands and feet to His Tenderness.

A CHILD'S HEART

If the Heavenly Kingdom is one of Love, it is already present on earth and to live the Kingdom we need the heart of a child. Jesus tells us: *Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven* (Mt 18:3). When adults respect the children and give them good examples, the young ones can make right decisions which often astonish us or are beyond our understanding. The following are a few beautiful true stories. Suzanne Mongrain-Smith is the niece of Sr. Cécile Ménard, M.I.C. She is a pastoral agent and music teacher at Saint Michael's Catholic School in New-Liskeard, Ontario. Suzanne is well aware of Haiti's problems—she has received some first-hand information from her aunt, Sr. Cécile, who worked in Haiti for several years. The earthquake and photos of homeless children stirred her compassion. *What can I do to help the nation that I love? Alone I can't do much, but what if I would contact other surrounding schools...* And the ball got rolling!



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FULL OF IDEAS

Each school came up with great ideas. Everyone took part, children, parents and teachers. What an adventure!

The children from Sacred-Heart Catholic School decided to share money from their piggy-banks. There are two hundred students from kindergarten to third grade. Were they generous? Surely there was not a penny left in the piggy-banks because they collected \$880.33. OUF! What generosity!

Children from the Assumption Catholic School, in the small village of Earlington, organized a pastry sale; parents and teachers helped out. But that was not the end, children spoke about a magic head-cap for each donation. They collected a total of \$585.00 for the children in Haiti. A touching deed, isn't it?

Students from Saint Michael's Catholic School, which was at the heart of the project, took on some impressive decisions. Though heart-wrenching, toy boxes were emptied and the most precious toys, books, CDs and DVDs were up for sale. Six purchasing tickets for one dollar were handed to buyers; at the end of the day a total of \$901.00 had been collected. Extraordinary! Bravo! The teacher, Suzanne, wrote: *I am flabbergasted! How true that our good God is good.*

Parents added their own contribution to the children's fund raising activities; with pride the three schools sent a check of \$4,000. With gratitude, the children from Haiti cry out: *Mèsi anpil!*¹ Do you hear them?

TINY FEET, BIG HEARTS

There are other stories about children who responded to the cry of the Haitian population. In Victoria, B.C., Saint Joseph's School decided to go on a walkathon in nature. The handmade Haitian flag was hoisted to the flag pole; parents, friends and children walked for a sum of \$9,000.00, an amount that was sent to our schools in Haiti. Since 1978, Mrs. Lavertu Morton and her husband have been the administrators of a foundation for Haiti; they affirm that, up to this day, they have never collected such a huge amount of

money. With grateful hearts: *Mèsi anpil, Mèsi anpil.*

A sweet-looking seven year old girl had a plan in mind. Somewhat like the T.V. stars, she also wanted to do her part to help the children in Haiti. Hearing her speak, one could soon discover that this little one has a heart of gold; the project she had in mind was full of love. However, she first needed the support of her mother and grand-mother. And it was "yes"! Oh, what joy!

One Saturday morning, after her figure skating practice, this determined young lady took to the ice and skated seventy-five times non-stop around the rink while keeping in mind the children in Haiti. Her tiny feet needed the support of a big heart to accomplish such a project. Back home, and under the vigilant presence of her mother and grand-mother, she went from door to door in her neighborhood telling people about her feat. Discreet smiles and laughter welcomed the young girl; she told her story again and again and received contributions in favor of the Haitian children who are without a home, without a school. With great joy, she sent to the MIC Mission Procure a generous amount of \$260. **BRAVO** to you little lady!

YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN THE HEART OF GOD

Ah! I can hear you: *Who is this young girl? Where does she live?* Here is her response: *What I have done is not for me but for the children in Haiti so that their schools can be rebuilt and food can be given to them. Don't print my photo or my name. God knows and that is sufficient!* Oh! Oh! These young ones surely can teach us.

Teachers, parents, children, all of you who have shared what you have with such generosity, your names will not appear on a list of donors, but they will be written in the Heart of God. Blessed are you! Your big hearts have given hands and feet to God's Tenderness. 

¹ Thank you very much in Creole

¹ Bulletin Board, Saint Joseph School, B.C.

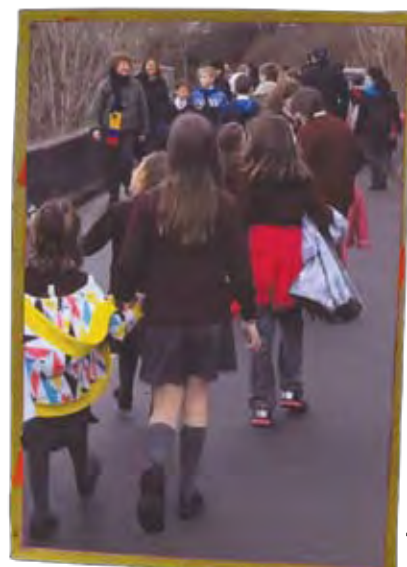
Photo Credit: L. Morton

² Children's Drawings Photo Credit: S. Mongrain-Smith

³ Children in Haiti Photo Credit: L. Gagné, M.I.C.

⁴ Walkathon in B.C.

Photo Credit: L. Morton





Unexpected Reunion

Les Cayes, Haiti – Limercia, a desperate mother who worries about her sons' survival, chooses to save the life of her youngest one. With confidence, she brings him to the nun who works at the dispensary located in the rural region. Sr. Madeleine Alarie, M.I.C., examines the dilemma with her and helps her to make the right decision. A proposal: the child could be adopted by a Canadian family. In Quebec, a family who has two girls, is waiting eagerly for a son to be offered them by way of the corporation "Welcome a Child".

By Lynn & Yves Morin

Relatives of ours have had the experience of adopting a child and it turned out to be a beautiful love story. For us, the process lasted five years until little Pierre-Joel was proposed to us. He was five years old when we brought him home. We realized then, that at the time we began dreaming of adoption, this little one was already in the womb of his Haitian mother.

ADOPTION AND INTEGRATION OF PIERRE-JOEL

May 1989—Lynn and her sister go to Port-au-Prince to bring home the little boy they had been waiting for. She hopes to meet the mother who bore the child for her, but it is not advisable. A suggestion is made: letters could be written via Sr. Madeleine because the mother is illiterate.

Back in Quebec with the child, the whole family is charmed by this little Ti-Moun¹. Pierre-Joel integrates easily; he is particularly smart, intelligent, quick and perceptive. He makes friends easily and becomes a little Quebecer very soon. Less than a month after his arrival, he speaks French fluently and forgets his Creole. He keeps no memories of his mother, his family or his life in Haiti. Yet, his biological mother is often mentioned in our conversations because we do not want him to be cut-off from his roots and we wish that a filial relationship be maintained. So many times we promise ourselves to go to Haiti together, but situations come up and we are unable to fulfill our promise.

DIFFICULT TO KEEP CONTACT

As long as Sr. Madeleine remains in Haiti, communication is easy. However, because of health problems, she has to come back to Canada. After a few years, the superior of the MIC house "Les Cayes" informs us that Limercia does not come to see them anymore and no one knows where she is or what she has become. Years go by without news from her.

In 1998, we write a long letter to the MIC Sisters who live in Port-au-Prince; we express our wish to find Limercia.

Sr. Madeleine Patenaude, M.I.C., hears about the request and looks at the photos of the boy. One day, she relates the story to the driver and he happens to know a lady by the name of Limercia. Perhaps she is the one who gave up her son for adoption in Canada. Limercia reappears, she comes to the Sisters' house and recognizes her son's photos. She thanks God for such a great joy. Sr. Madeleine records the mother's message to her son and to the adoptive family. To hear a mother's voice speak with emotion, sing and pray in Creole brings tears in everybody's eyes.

DISCOVERIES AND EMOTIONS OF PIERRE-JOEL

Some years go by before we receive more news with photos of his two brothers and a niece. When Pierre-Joel discovers that not only does he have a mother in Haiti but a family, he goes through a range of emotions. As an adolescent, he treasures the photos and cassette without ever expressing his desire to see his family.

November 2009, we realize it is time to go on that trip to Haiti, for so long we have been talking about it. Pierre-Joel is now twenty-five. We hope to meet his mother Limercia and other members of his family. The trip is scheduled for December 30 to January 6, 2010. Limercia had been praying and dreaming of seeing her son before she dies. Her faith was blessed, her wish was granted. Sr. Madeleine organizes the reunion at the MIC house in Port-au-Prince.

Emotions are high as we meet for the first time. Limercia, who is very petite, has incredible strength. The big brother Jean-Robert, 39 years of age, bursts into tears as he comes in contact with the young brother whom he had taken care of as a baby; he came with his five children. There is also Bernadel, his other brother, now 37 years of age. This moving reunion is followed by three more meetings during the week.

Our hearts are filled with emotions as we bid farewell to the family. We hope that Pierre-Joel, who has now found his place in the circle of his natural family, will



2

come back some day to Haiti. In fact, they had not forgotten him, but never thought that one day they would be reunited.

OUR LAND AND HEARTS SHOOK

Shortly after our return to Canada, the earth shook and we could receive no news from our son's family. Pierre-Joel who is enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces hopes to leave with the special unit of 800 soldiers selected at Valcartier. He is refused this mission under the pretext that if he were to find members of his family under the rubbles he would experience a traumatic shock. They do not know our son. With much difficulty he accepts the decision of his superiors, but helps in the preparation of the mission.

Eleven days of anguish have gone by; finally, we are able to speak with Sr. Madeleine and learn that my son's family is fine. What a relief to know that the needs are only of material nature; we will be able to contribute. We continue praying for the survival of that beautiful country, for the warm-hearted people, for all those like Sr. Madeleine who love them and support them. We are most grateful to the two Sisters, both named Madeleine, who reassured us with such compassion and warmth.

We also pray for my son's natural family whom we met and keep in our hearts, no matter the distance. 🌿

¹ Child in Creole

¹ Limercia and Lynn

² Family of Pierre-Joel

Photos Credit: Yves Morin



A Spiritual Odyssey



The AsMIC are celebrating their 30th Anniversary. Thirty years... it's the age an adult should have achieved maturity and acquired a discerning mind. It also means being autonomous and taking charge of a future that is in constant evolution. **AsMIC**—do we know what these five letters, apparently meaningless actually stand for?

By Marie-Claire Bombardier
& Francine Paquette

As stands for *Associates*

We could be given “As” in all our projects. Our involvement is inspired by the same spirituality as the one lived by the MIC Sisters—a spirituality that encompasses the missionary dimension expressed in a spirit of Thanksgiving the Marian way. We are an integral part of the same spiritual family, associated to the same charism as that of the Foundress Délia Tétreault; we strive to live with conviction our Christian commitment. Not only do we share the same charism, in fact our roots intermingle.

In the early years of the Institute, Délia appealed to a good number of women who helped the Sisters and brought support to their missions abroad. In 1905, the first group that came together was called *Auxiliary Ladies of the M.I.C.* Through the years, as the Institute opened more houses, successive workrooms followed, rightfully called “charity workshops” and “groups of missionary cooperation”.

These women would sew, bake and offer their talents wherever needed; members of the Institute would work with them and encourage them in their endeavors. Between the years 1950–1960 these workshops disappeared. Today, garage sales, bazaars, draws have replaced the workrooms.

Jocelyne Dallaire has been president of the organization since 2007. She is also one of the first pioneers of the AsMIC. She relates the beginning of her adventure:

In 1974 I had a great desire to form an alliance with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. I thus gave the MIC Community a manuscript of four pages for them to study the project I was proposing. A small seed was sown. In 1976, year of the Sisters' General Chapter, Sr. Madeleine Loranger, M.I.C., General Superior, gives her consent. In 1978-1979 Andrée Bellerive and Nicole Guénette join me as members. In 1980, the three of us together with Sisters Léonie Therrien, Louise Sauvé and Clémence Trudel, elaborated the basic principles of what was to become AsMIC. As of 1983, in Quebec, many were those who came to join us, men as well as women. The AsMIC are well anchored in the spirit of service and mutual aid. They are also present in countries where the MIC Sisters have missions.

In 2004, a change took place among the associated groups. “Arrimage”/”Link” a word that helped us understand things differently. The spiritual legacy of Délia

¹ AsMIC group of Joliette
Photograph, J. Chevette

² Andrée, Nicole and Jocelyne
Photo Credit: AsMIC

Tétreault constitutes specifics for the life of the MIC Sisters and that of the AsMIC. As laity we form an autonomous group having as pillars Mary, Thanksgiving and Mission. We strive to deepen our spirituality, draw from our inner Source and reach out to others without necessarily leaving our own country.

M stands for *Missionaries*

We have seen that Délia had organizational skills and thanks to her vision she succeeded in establishing workrooms for the laity who were interested in helping the missions. Currently, in Quebec, there are six AsMIC groups: Granby, Joliette, Laval, Montreal, Quebec City, and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. Each group initiates its own activities keeping in mind the AsMIC goal: to help the MIC mission works where the need is greatest.

The revenues from our various activities have allowed us to help schools in Haiti, Peru, the Philippines, to support orphanages in Malawi and Zambia, to contribute in building a canteen for children in Madagascar, to sponsor a parish in Guatemala, to financially help women's leadership centers in Bolivia. We've also contributed to the global aid in the aftermath of Haiti's earthquake. These actions are perhaps small pebbles in the ocean, but are they not pebbles of hope and encouragement?

As Associates we often have the opportunity of meeting those *women without frontiers* who have walked the extra mile in mission lands. As AsMIC, to leave one's country on a long term basis is not one of our goals. However, on certain occasions, some of us have gone to Bolivia, Haiti or Guatemala, either for a practicum, attend a congress or simply to offer our services. On a regular basis we are invited to the MIC Sisters' feasts; our participation to these events reinforces our sense of belonging. For us, there is pride being under the same banner of this great spiritual family: *The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*.

Unlike the days of Mother Délia, the Sisters do not request our help. We do



not wait for them to claim our support. Our energies are funneled towards relieving human suffering and poverty, in solidarity with our brothers and sisters here and abroad—the MIC mission areas are good indicators for us. Moreover, in our personal daily activities we strive to apply the spirituality which Mother Délia has bequeathed us.

We draw from our inner Source and
reach out to others without necessarily
leaving our own country. ∞

IC stands for *Immaculate Conception*

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is our pole of attraction. With her, we learn to read the signs of God in our daily living. As she did, we try to understand and welcome God's mysterious ways. Mary is our source of inspiration and our liaison between heaven and earth.

The AsMIC members come together to pray, reflect, and share. We welcome life with its joys and sorrows knowing that all is grace bestowed on us by a loving God. To live and be involved stimulates you? Then why not be an AsMIC? We would be most happy to welcome you.

If interested, contact Jocelyne Dallaire:
Joce46@videotron.ca ∞

Sister Marie, A Multi-Talented Woman

She is now retired at the MICs convent in Pont-Viau. Sister Marie Fugère is 96 years of age; she is self-taught and has had many trades: educator, house painter, architect, gardener, carpenter, artist, cook, plumber, business woman... She relates a few memories of her missionary life.

By Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

HT: Sr. Marie, when I walk by your workshop and see you head-to-head with the statues you are repairing, I wonder if you talk to them... Do you speak to the Sacred Heart as you freshen up His red cloak?

MF: Yes, I speak to Him and to the Blessed Virgin also. I take this opportunity to pray for all the peoples I have known throughout my long life...

HT: Some Sisters who worked with you in Haiti, say that you practiced many trades in that country. I would like to go over some of your missionary experiences. Could we start?

MF: Yes, I am happy to recall those thirty-one years of my life in Haiti. I was very happy there, and a large chunk of my heart has remained there...

In 1955, I arrived at 'Les Côteaux' and immediately had a statue of the Blessed Virgin erected in front of our school Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. I taught in that school and prepared children for their First Communion. On Sundays, I would

visit the families to learn about the local culture of the Haitian people. I was then transferred to Roche-à-Bateau, again as a teacher, but I was especially preoccupied by the students' poor life conditions. Here, I had the latrines dug; then at Chantal, I had the showers installed. What can I say, I am a practical woman! I saw all the urgent needs around me...

HT: Is it true that you also directed construction work? Where did you acquire your competence in that field?

MF: That dates way back to my childhood years... I remember that at nine years of age, I would climb to the roof of the barn and I would help my father choose the shingles. In 1927, when we moved to Rosemont, my father asked me to design the blueprint of our new house; I temporarily became an architect. In Haiti, I went from north to south to supervise roof repairs of our houses that had been damaged by cyclones. I would sometimes knock at the door of the Oblate Fathers to seek advice. I have to say that I supervised many other constructions while I was in Haiti.

HT: You are therefore a practical woman and a woman of action. Now,



about the statues, where did you learn the techniques to restore statues to their original beauty?

MF: Your question brings me back to the art studio of our Mother House. Between the years 1948–1951 before my departure for Haiti, I learned to paint on flags, on banners, on church ornaments; I prepared missionary exhibitions, etc. A Sister initiated me to the secrets of painting and restoring statues. My new experience served me well in Rimouski. After the city's fire in 1950 many statues were greatly damaged and needed repair. Later, in Haiti, all that experience allowed me to help the parish priests who wanted to freshen up the statues, the paintings and other pieces of art.

HT: I was told that you also have a *green thumb*. Your artistic eyes must have marveled before the beautiful tropical vegetation. Did you cultivate gardens?

MF: Yes, I did; I planted fruit trees, vines, shrubs, plants and flowers of all kinds. I lived in the midst of a very poor population; therefore, I would hire the local people to do this kind of work; this helped families to survive. I tried to help them in many different ways. One day, via the radio, I was able to set free some individuals who were being falsely accused. Another time, I took responsibility of an infant who had been abandoned; I accompanied the child until he reached adulthood. Today, he is a policeman—a responsible, mature person who is a good citizen for the society. I hope that my presence in Haiti has left traces in the lives of many families who crossed my path. They are numerous because I also lived in Limbé and Port-au-Prince.

HT: Sr. Marie, your story is very moving; you have given the best of yourself everywhere you went. Do you also have some other anecdotes to share with us?

MF: Of course. The trips were long, eventful, and full of unforeseen incidents. The first time I saw a river swollen by the abundant rains, I stopped in front of it and discouraged I said to the guide: *What are you going to do?* Without a word, he took me by the waist and nimbly transported me on the other side of the river bank. I did not even have time to think that I

was in the arms of a man! Another time, I was alone in the desert and the axle of the truck broke... what to do? Nothing else but to walk alone for hours until I reached the ocean shore.

There were many dramatic incidents due to major cyclones that hit the Island every year; however the lives of the MIC Sisters have always been spared. The poor families in our area often lost lives and all their possessions. I always admired their faith in God and their resiliency.

HT: What has been your reaction upon hearing of the devastating earthquake that occurred recently?

MF: Since that time, my body is here but my spirit is over there. I think of the poor people who died or lost everything, the collapsed schools, the churches in rubbles. How many tabernacles are buried underneath the ruins? It is the Presence of God... what is God telling us? I think a rebirth is necessary not only in the way the buildings are constructed but in the mentality of the people. Their saying—*Débrouiller: pas péché!*¹ must change. Each one must take his/her own responsibility to *bring about change* as late Pope John-Paul II expressed during his tour to Haiti in 1983.

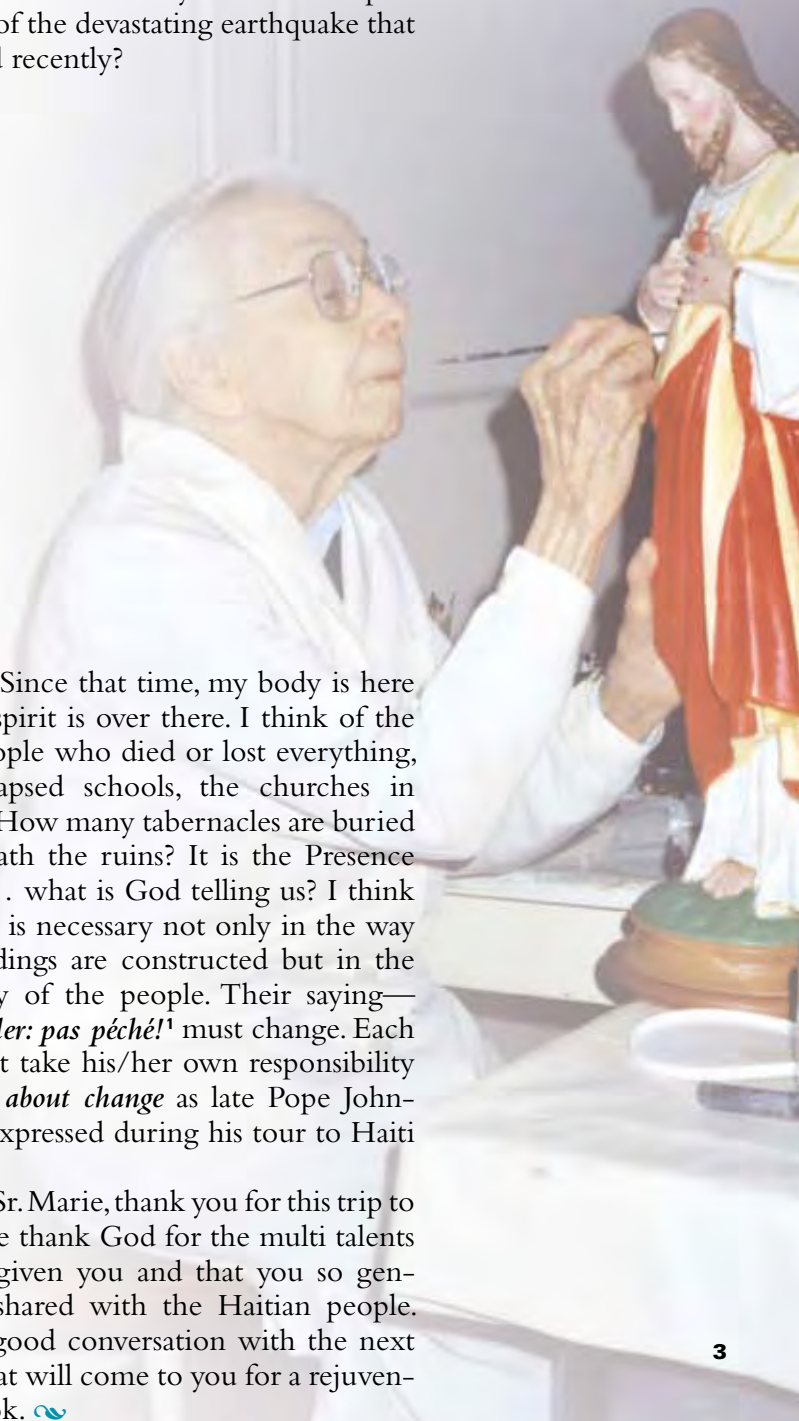
HT: Sr. Marie, thank you for this trip to Haiti! We thank God for the multi talents He has given you and that you so generously shared with the Haitian people. Have a good conversation with the next statue that will come to you for a rejuvenating look. 

¹ *Débrouiller: pas péché!* To get by no matter how, is not a sin.

² Sr. Marie climbing to the rooftop of the house, Port-au-Prince

³ Sr. Marie in Haiti, Les Côteaux, 1955
Photos Credit: MIC

³ Sr. Marie, the artist
Photo Credit:
H. Turcotte, M.I.C.



Youth – Solidarity MIC

— Mission Experience Abroad

More than ever, today's young adults search for opportunities to experience the mission field abroad; to see the world differently from the perspective of the poor. So many have committed themselves for a period of time—they looked after the abandoned children, worked with people in poor villages. Their experience transformed them and they will never forget.

By Suzette Jean, M.I.C

The following is an excerpt of a letter written by a young adult who worked in an orphanage in Bolivia:

This experience was beyond all my hopes; I fell in love with those affectionate children. Incredible how happy they are with so little. They actually have nothing, yet they are grateful for the least sign of attention. I learned to appreciate my life, I am so privileged in more ways than one; I learned to be more open to the love of those children who surrounded me. The day I had to leave, I felt a surge of affection for each one; it was like leaving behind my own family. I hope many will have the opportunity of living such a beautiful experience of love with those who have but their hearts to give and share.

AN EXPERIENCE ABROAD IS OFFERED TO YOU...

- Do you want to live within another culture including the many challenges, the discoveries, the joys?
- Do you feel called to commit yourself to others?
- Do you wish to open your mind and heart to the cultural and spiritual values of another nation?
- Are you ready to give time and receive a practical, adequate training? (evenings or week-ends)

To you whose wish is to be of service to the poor, who wants to give the best of yourself to someone in need, we propose a mission experience abroad. What are the requirements?

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE TRAINING SESSIONS

- Age: 18 to 35
- Good physical health and a certain psychological and emotional maturity
- Openness to the Christian faith and to the spiritual dimension of life
- Able to live in a group and work as a team member
- Look after your financial resources to pay for your personal expenses: plane tickets, vaccinations, language course if necessary, other personal expenditures...)
- Participate in fund-raising activities to help pay group activities
- Basic notions of the local language where you will work so as to better communicate with the people
- Work as a volunteer in whatever field you are welcomed
- Capacity to appreciate the culture of the nation welcoming you; respect its language, its food, its religion, its clothes, and its way of being...
- Accept being accompanied by a Team Member during the time of the project
- Written statement from a doctor to certify that you are in good health
- Other documents might be required before leaving
- Follow-up meeting shortly after returning home



Photo: Myriam and Johanne – Mission experience in Haiti

– Photo Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Lyrics: Together We Can Change the World – By: Mark Shepard

STEPS TO REGISTER

- A letter describing your motivations and desire to be part of the Project: Youth-Solidarity MIC;
- Your Curriculum Vitae;
- Confirm that you can, without any physical problem, live for a period of 5 weeks abroad and commit yourself to work as a volunteer.

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TO CONTACT A TEAM MEMBER:

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Dawn of a New Life

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

Délia Tétreault



Ursule Charette, m.i.c.
(Sr. Sainte-Rosalie)
1910-2010
Saint-Cyprien, QC

She lived to be one hundred and Sister Ursule consecrated most of her life to the Chinese. She was fourth in a family of ten and she studied at our Apostolic School in Rimouski. At the age of seventeen, Ursule entered the Novitiate. In Manchuria, she quickly learned the Mandarin language. During eighteen years she treated the sick with competence. In the midst of national wars, and the many dangers she encountered within a communist country, she stayed in China to look after the wounded. After a brief furlough in Canada, she left for Taiwan. In 2000 she arrived at the Délia Tétreault Pavillion where she waited with serenity for the call of her Master.



Yvonne Casault, m.i.c.
(Sr. Claude-de-Jésus)
1930-2010
Montmagny, QC

At a very young age, Yvonne learned to make small sacrifices. There was sickness in the family and Yvonne who was third out of fourteen children took on many responsibilities. The house visits of the MIC Sisters awakened her to a special calling—the missionary life. She entered our Community and worked for the Holy Childhood in Montreal. Later, she took a formal training program in radiologic technology. Having received her degree, she was sent to Malawi, Africa, where she served in the field of her competence. Thirteen years later, she experienced heart problems and came back to Canada. The following ten years she worked as a competent accountant and with serenity she lived her last days.



Hélène Fontaine, m.i.c.
(Sr. Stella-Marie)
1925-2010
Charny, QC

Hélène had ten siblings; seventh in line she lived with her grandparents. At the age of 22 she entered religious life. Shortly after her final vows, she was appointed to the Philippines. Sister Hélène worked closely with the local people and learned their dialects. At the novitiate, in Baguio, she was on the formation team but also gave time to the poor. Upon her return to Canada, she was appointed Superior of the MIC Community in Joliette, QC. Later, she taught French to the immigrants for a period of twelve years. Her last mandate was to look after the ill Sisters at Pont-Viau. Before passing away, Sr. Hélène said: *For my beautiful missionary life: Magnificat!*



Thérèse Gloutnez, m.i.c.
(Sr. Saint-Gilles)
1915-2010
Saint-Nazaire, QC

Thérèse came from a family of eighteen children. Third in line, she took over the household chores when her mother became ill. With passion, Thérèse lived the various stages of her life. As a student, she was particularly attracted to the MIC Sisters who came to her school to speak about the missions. At twenty-seven, she decided to become a nun and entered our Institute at Pont-Viau. Sr. Thérèse was appointed Superior in the Philippines and worked closely with the personnel of the school in Manila. She was especially drawn towards the homeless and with success helped them out of their poverty. Her intimate union with the Lord radiated through her actions until the very end.

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!*



Sister Thérèse Lavoie, M.I.C. (center)
Montreal, Quebec

Her love for the Peruvian people is a faithful one. Sr. Thérèse is returning to Pucallpa and will be involved in pastoral work.



Sister Noëlla Fréchette, M.I.C.
Saint-Apollinaire, Quebec

After a brief stay in Quebec, Sister Noëlla, who has been years in Africa, is returning with joy to look after community chores.



Sister Elmire Allary, M.I.C.
Sainte-Mélanie, Quebec

The simple life of the Peruvian people has always fascinated Sr. Elmire. She is returning to Cajabamba where she will be involved in social services and be at the heart of the people's daily lives.



Sister Claire Desrochers, M.I.C. (left)
Saint-Charles-de-Mandeville, Quebec

To be of service is Sr. Claire's motto. She is gladly returning to Napo, in Peru where she will work with the Peruvian people and be of service where needed.

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*Thank you
for your solidarity!*

Earth and Life Are Precious Gifts of God

PRESS RELEASE

Leaders of the four Congregations of Holy Cross sisters, brothers and priests have issued a joint statement on climate change, declaring “Earth and the life it sustains are precious gifts of God”. The statement commits four Holy Cross congregations, numbering over 2,800 members, ministering in 19 countries on the five continents to collaboratively take specific actions to stem the global climate crisis. We realize the positive impact we could have on climate change by pooling our experience, expertise and energy. We have committed our congregations to work together on specific goals in response to this global crisis.

FAMILY OF HOLY CROSS STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

“We must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. This means being committed to making joint decisions...aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God...”

Benedict XVI
Caritas In Veritate, 50

EARTH AND THE LIFE it sustains are precious gifts of God, now radically threatened by climate change and ecological exploitation. Safeguarding these sacred gifts for future generations is a moral responsibility integral to the mission of the Family of Holy Cross. For people of faith, response to this crisis is not an “option”; it is a matter of justice and solidarity.

THEREFORE, WE

Marianites of Holy Cross, United States
Priests and Brothers of Holy Cross, Italy
Sisters of Holy Cross, Montreal
Sisters of the Holy Cross, Indiana

will work together to:

- Foster an ethos of care for God’s creation in our members, colleagues, institutions and those we serve.
- Resist the culture of consumerism and foster models of development that respect the rights of the whole Earth community.
- Reduce energy consumption, increase efficiency and employ renewable technologies to achieve carbon neutrality in our congregations by 2050.
- Ensure that ecological sustainability is integral to our congregational planning, decision-making and practices.
- Utilize our financial and human resources to support the development of an ecological economy.
- Urge governments and industries to adopt policies that successfully mitigate climate change and reduce its impacts on those most vulnerable.
- Promote interdependence, right relationship and commitment to the common good, countering a culture of individualism, greed, exclusion and exploitation.

NB—In solidarity with the wide family of Holy Cross, we, the personnel of the MIC Mission Press are happy to corroborate this statement and to publish it for our readers.

Website: www.holycrossjustice.org



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ISRAEL: HOLY LAND
"Come and follow me"
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and F. Christian Bourgault
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I Am in the Image of God

*I believe in God the Creator
who gives us the sun, the moon,
the water, the flowers, the plants,
the animals, the whole world.
I believe in the sacredness of
the earth and in my responsibility
to take care of it and love it.
I am in the Image of God.*

*I believe in God
who creates us , co-creators.
He invites us to have dreams
and projects for the good of all.
I believe I am called to build
a more beautiful world where
justice and peace will reign.
I am in the Image of God.*

*I believe in God
who gives us the capacity
to love and be loved.
I believe I am called to
reach out to others
to welcome their differences
and be enriched by their friendship.
I am in the Image of God.*

Mond'Ami: Poems and Prayers



Photo Credit: L. Laberge, M.I.C.