VOL. 37, Nº 4 | OCTOBER ▪ NOVEMBER ▪ DECEMBER 2010 | $3.00

MIC Mission News

To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

90th Anniversary

Hong Kong

Stop – Be Still!

Canada

Women – Agents of Social Change

In Focus

Stop! Then... Walk

Publication of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

OCTOBER
FOR WORLD MISSION DAY

May this day be an occasion for understanding that the task of proclaiming Christ is the most vital service to which the Church is called for the benefit of humanity.

NOVEMBER
FOR THE MISSIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

May the Churches of Latin America move forward with their continent-wide mission commitment by making it part of the universal missionary task of the people of God.

DECEMBER
OPENING OUR DOORS TO CHRIST

May people everywhere open their doors to Christ and His Gospel of peace, brotherhood and justice.

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

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MICs – Outremont, QC
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Tax Receipt
Registration Number:
NE 89346 9585 RR0001
Presse missionnaire MIC

Legal Deposits
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
National Library of Canada
ISSN 0315-9655

Subscription rates (4 issues)
Single 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 Canada Fund for Periodicals (CFP) for mailing expenses.

Mail-publications convention
Number 0040064029
Registration Number 11020

EDITORIAL

Stop! Look and Listen, then…

The pulse of our large cities drives us at a crazy pace. It is good to say: Stop, quiet down, look over the film of your life. Be aware of the present moment, stop racing from one place to another, stop being a victim of your own agenda. Seasons and years flow by as quickly as water over a waterfall.

Terry Fox, a Canadian athlete, who ignored his own pain and ran cross-country with one goal in mind—raise funds for cancer research, was an inspiration and model for many. To set a goal for ourselves gives meaning to life.

To live fully is more than being swept up in a furious non-stop whirlwind. Following the example of outstanding walkers who have a goal for humanity, it is important to ***Stop… then walk*** as the writer André Gadbois suggests in his article. Stop! Keep away from the whirlwind, from the rat race, keep only what is needed in your backpack, this will lighten-up your walk and life will become less stressful.

Why are there so many suicides among our youth? It is troubling to think that more than 20% of young Canadians live with such intense emotional stress that they want to die or take means to harm themselves. In Canada, suicide is the second highest cause of death for youth aged 13-18; it counts more victims than that of the total deaths caused by cancer, AIDS, and other natural causes.

When I saw the movie ***I Killed My Mother*** by Xavier Dolan, I was troubled by the lack of dialogue between the mother and the son. They loved each other and wanted the best for each other, but an insurmountable barrier existed between them. A stop in the course of our lives can change everything. Sister Jacintha understood that point and now she takes time to listen to the youth in Hong-Kong. Sister Patsy stopped to listen to the Voice of the Lord; she heard and committed herself to follow Him on a missionary journey that will lead her to listen to others. Thus the importance to ***Stop*** at a certain juncture of our life; look closely at our own film and then walk in the right direction.

Our life is more than a motion picture. It is a conquest, day after day, like those millions of women who walk to obtain their rights and who take their place in society. With all those walkers who have a goal for a better world, ***let us stop, look, listen and then walk!***

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

READERS' CORNER

micmissionnews@pressemic.org
calls out to you!

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

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

Lisette Laliberté, Montreal, QC
It is with pleasure that I read your magazine as soon as I receive it. Bravo for your good work and keep it up. You help many people to pray and to remain hopeful.

Louise & Jeanne D'Arc, Montreal, QC
I just received your magazine *Le Précurseur / MIC Mission News* and as always I read it cover to cover. The texts are remarkably dense. The themes are conducive to reflection. The subjects present us a clear picture of certain realities we are unaware of or about which we are misinformed. The center page of the last issue (Jan.-March) which depicted the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti was an eye opener. We felt so much closer to the Haitian population.

Odette J. Doyon, Plessisville, QC
Your publication is always interesting and it is true to its leitmotif: *To sow seeds of joy and hope*. Thank you.

Louise Migneron, Trois-Rivières, QC
I love your magazine and I particularly appreciated the winter issue 2010—*Carving the Seasons of our Lives*. I am a former teacher, so I was especially touched by Sr. Huguette Turcotte's article and also that of Sr. Ditma Luz Trocio which demonstrated the gratitude of their former students. The center page, outlining the situation of the Church of Port-au-Prince, was also greatly appreciated. Thank you and continue with your good work!

THE GOD OF LONG JOURNEYS

Early in life scouting taught me to walk in all seasons and I have been walking ever since. I have acquired some tools that have helped me find serenity; for example: taking time to stop and think. Walking has helped me to let go of things, leaving behind the heavy loads and thus be freer as I move forward.

By **André Gadbois**

It is said that Buddha, Socrates and Jesus were indefatigable walkers; they walked kilometers to meet people, to listen to their stories, to ask them questions, to sympathize with them and help them move forward. These three were convinced of the same truth: Truth is at the core of all human beings and it seeks out its path. The first, the Awakened One, concentrated on meditation to achieve liberation; the second, the Midwife of Souls, used dialogue that led to self awareness; the third, the Savior, proposed unconditional Love and Forgiveness. Every day, at dawn, these three pillars of humanity taking little with them would begin their walk. To walk was their way of being, their way of living—their hearts were open with no barriers… quite contrary to those lives that are closed because of prejudices, of greed, or of certain dogmas. We could say that these three human beings were nomads… somewhat like God in the Bible who walked with His People in the desert and who made known to David that he preferred journeying with His People rather than dwell in a house (2 Samuel 7: 1.17). These three pillars of humanity were like the Father who runs toward His wayward son or like the shepherd who goes out to search for the lost sheep.

Fill up your knapsack with the essential! Go, begin walking!

LAZARUS, COME FORTH!

What Jesus tells his friend Lazarus is clear and audacious: ***Lazarus, come forth!*** (Jn 11:43) Come out of your old house, untie the grave cloths of your body, open your windows and doors, walk outside where you will find the faithful guiding breath and raise your eyes towards the horizon. Still today, Jesus tells us to let go of our old ways, to take the road and risk meeting someone who is fearful and needs our smile, or risk coming across a person who is searching for truth and needs our guidance. Or we may walk with someone who has given up and needs our patience. On the road, we also risk falling, getting hurt and will need to be helped by our neighbor; or we might be hungry and need to be nourished by a stranger, or we might have to get rid of our possessions and change our life style.

Fill your knapsack with the essential! Go, begin walking! A surprise is awaiting you… your old stuff will no longer be a necessity, you will be transformed. The knapsack: a symbol of what is dear to us. We carry the knapsack to take up the challenge of a long walk. As the kilometers add up, we discover that a certain tool is missing, that another is completely useless or too heavy thus impeding our ease to walk lightly and freely. What is considered "essential" to begin our walk? Why hold on to unfulfilling possessions and wealth? Walk and ponder! Become aware of your energy, take your pulse, learn to breathe well, meet others and share, be one with nature, and in the evening thank the Lord who has fed you with His Manna.

[1] COLOMBIER, Noël – record: Catéchansons, Vol. 3, Paris

SHAPED BY THE WALK

Though they walked long distances, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus stopped to replenish. They had faithful friends and supporters who would offer them a place to rest, to reflect, to renew; food was offered to sustain them in their walk. Keeping away from honors and riches, they lived a simple life, always in motion, always on the road—their attention was focused on the other. These three sages were in the world yet they were able to be detached from it so as to remain awakened, attentive and conscious. The walk is a symbol of my life, of my priorities, of my wisdom. I am shaped by the walk, I am fashioned by it. I think of the snail as it moves slowly across the ground and seems to admire every little twig it crosses on the way; it knows how to protect itself and how to stay alive. In contrast, I then think of the modern man who "twenty-four seven" is so taken up with his personal affairs and his appearance, always competing, unconscious of humanity's future, speeding along as though there is no tomorrow.

You are the God of long journeys…You are the God who walks our roads to meet us and accompany us. You are the Light in our lives that helps us through our dark and turbulent nights. You are the Light that opens us to freedom.[1]

This song, written by Noel Colombier, describes very well our God as a nomad, a wanderer, a God who walks to meet us on the Emmaus road, to question us, to reflect with us and keep us out of our grave. This God is capable of lifting up the weak, the depressed, the bored, the narrow minded and help them walk again…

He counts on us, His disciples, His witnesses, to show them the Way, to get them to walk again freely with ease, alleviating from them all anxieties.

A Missionary Excursion

At the MIC International Scholasticate, twelve Sisters of seven different nationalities were wondering how to wrap up their seven months of final training here in Canada. Sister Patsy Morency launched an idea: ***I would love to show you my birthplace!*** A spark appeared in everyone's eyes! Why not? Yes, it would be interesting to visit your native province and to take that opportunity to sow the missionary seed as well as the vocational one. We would take up the challenge in gratitude for all that we received while here in Canada.

By **Madeleine Grenier, M.I.C.**

EDMUNSTON, N.B. … HERE WE COME!

It was early on a sunny morning in April when the twelve of us left Montreal for a Province we knew very little about. The beauty of the spring season captured our attention; in awe, we sang and praised God for His magnificent creation. Our trip lasted eighteen hours. Upon arrival, Sister Patsy's mother, Yvonne and her sister, Irma welcomed us wholeheartedly with a delicious and copious meal. Tired but happy, we then proceeded to the Diocesan Center where Sister Alda assigned us each a room which we greatly appreciated after such a long trip.

A FIRST CONTACT WITH THE YOUTH

The next day, we were at Saint Joseph's Elementary School where Sister Patsy received her primary education. At 8 a.m, Mrs. Brigitte Babineau, one of the teachers, welcomed us and presented us to Mr. Alain Sirois who is the community development agent; his organization focuses on intercultural affairs. At 9 a.m. groups from the primary level with their teachers entered the assembly hall.

The little ones were astonished to see such cultural diversity. As a former student of that school, Sister Patsy spoke about her younger days and experiences at Saint Joseph. The children were impressed! Questions abounded! Then, Sister Maria Goretty Garcia from Peru, asked the children if they wanted to go on a trip around the world. Spontaneously, joyfully, they all agreed. Wearing the national costume of her country, each Scholastic presented her country defining its characteristics. With the help of a power-point, the students could see other children of their own age busy doing things which are particular to their country. Very attentive, the students asked a variety of questions.

Following the presentation of each country, folklore dances and typical mime songs were performed. What a great experience of openness and international display for these young students.

Later, a second group of older students walked in. This time, Sr. Géralda Jourdain, Haitian and animator, quickly captured the attention of all. Fascinated by what they saw and heard, the young people left the auditorium jubilating. That day, we met 150 students and we were happy to have had such good interaction with them. A little seed of love and fraternity was sown.

The following day, we were invited to Notre Dame School. The experience was just as positive as the previous day. The students expressed their appreciation by offering us a card which they had designed and signed. What a beautiful occasion this was to build bridges, strong of friendship, joy and universal fraternity.

IN THE PARISHES

With joy and enthusiasm we were welcomed by the parishioners of St. Joseph's Church, the Cathedral and Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. We participated to all the Eucharistic Celebrations and our cultural diversity left an impact. Being from the Diocese of Edmunston, Sister Patsy

was invited to speak about her missionary journey; at each liturgy her MIC companions were involved either in doing the readings, walking in with the gifts at the offering, being of service at the altar… We greeted people as they walked out of the church; they expressed their joy, their gratitude and we were invited to their homes.

RESPONDING TO THE INVITATIONS

Many were the families, friends of Sister Patsy, who welcomed us with open arms to share a meal with them. Though we were numerous (12) they were not reluctant to receive us. Joy and openness filled the atmosphere. Each guest spoke about her culture, her country and gave first-hand information to those who had questions. Sharing with each other was not only enriching but created links of solidarity and friendship.

AN OUTSTANDING WELCOME IN THE DIOCESE

With much love and care we were welcomed in the Diocese. The Bishop, Msgr. Claude Champagne, O.M.I., Father Roger Dionne and the Hospitallers of Saint Joseph expressed their appreciation and long-standing affection for the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. The attention, the respect and kindness of everyone left us in awe; with deep gratitude in our hearts we could only praise God for such wonderful people. We felt that our multicultural presence was a prophetic sign of the Kingdom which is in the making.

What about Sister Patsy's family? The warm and friendly welcome we received from them was more than we could ever imagine. Detail upon detail, nothing was forgotten; they organized our days, made us feel at home; throughout our stay, they reflected the goodness and thoughtfulness of a faith-filled people whose love is sincere and whose generosity is abundant. Gratitude leaps from our hearts and makes us sing: *Marvelous are the deeds the Lord has done for us!*

EVALUATING OUR MISSIONARY EXCURSION

So much has been received, so much has been given. Joy, kindness, sharing, warm greetings from everyone, all these and more touched our hearts. The twelve MICs from the International Scholasticate have been enriched by what they saw and heard and by the interaction they've had with so many people. Sister Augustine Rafenomamantany, M.I.C. gives us her impression.

I am most grateful to God and to the formation team who allowed us to live such a missionary experience. Thanks to Sister Patsy who had the idea and opened so many doors for us. For me, this trip was an eye-opening: the beautiful nature, the scenic views, the encounter with a different people and mentality, the diocese with its own particularities. It opened my heart—as I was being welcomed I also welcomed the other. My horizons have expanded and my perception of things has changed, as I have grasped certain realities which were unknown to me up until this experience.

The goodness of the people, their friendliness and cordiality touched me deeply. The families who welcomed us in their homes with such generosity have left an impact which I will long remember. I thank my colleagues who have collaborated in making this project a success.

Marvelous are the deeds the Lord has done for us!

[1] MIC Sisters wearing their national costumes.
Photo Credit:
M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

The Joy of a Celebration

By **Carole Guévin**

Sunday, May 16, 2010 – We highlighted the 90th Anniversary of our publication: ***Le Précurseur/ MIC Mission News***. Two hundred guests came and participated in the event. The program offered a variety of presentations, to mention a couple: Representing "La Sagouine", Sr. Marie-Hélène Roy speaking in Acadian French described with humor the many adventures the Sisters encountered as they went from door to door (1920-1950) to offer the mission magazine in the Province of Quebec. Also, a folk group "Light Feet of Laval" who specializes in Quebec folklore performed some traditional dances and then invited the guests to join them on the floor. A whirlwind of joy and laughter filled the atmosphere. With simplicity, the celebration was a success: great enthusiasm, friendliness, openness, a pleasant spirit-filled ambience.

Mrs. Lorraine Pagé, President of the Board of Administration, welcomed the guests with finesse and captured everyone's attention as she underscored Délia Tétreault's audacious contribution to the Church and society at the dawn of the 20th century. Wishing that you could also participate in our joy, we present her integral discourse to you.

This magazine is famous in many ways. Its duration… and also rare—it is created, edited, distributed essentially by these women.

« We are here today to celebrate an anniversary unlike any other—the 90th Anniversary of the magazine Le Précurseur/ MIC Mission News launched in 1920 and 1923 respectively by Délia Tétreault, Foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This woman still astounds us today, you can imagine what she was like in her days…

In the early 20th century, Délia Tétreault was one of those women who fashioned the Quebec society. At a time when women were kept submissive and ignorant, inspired women founded religious communities. At the dawn of that century, Quebec counted approximately 40 religious communities and by 1940 there were 97. This phenomenon speaks for itself—religion was of greatest importance within the social fabric of that era. It also illustrates to what degree religious life was an opportunity for millions of women to elevate their status personally, socially, intellectually or artistically which otherwise would have been impossible had they remained 'in the world'.

Whereas a woman's role in those days was in the home, Délia Tétreault founded a religious missionary community. The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Con-

ception deserve to be qualified as "Women Without Frontiers": Whereas Quebec was then self-centered, these Sisters journeyed to far-away, unknown countries. Whereas widespread prejudice against strangers shaped the values, the attitudes, the behaviors, the Sisters reached out to others with an open spirit and welcoming attitude. Whereas women were then restricted to few activities, the Sisters innovated in the field of development. They worked relentlessly for women's rights, elevating their status by means of education: all this happened much before the concept of international cooperation and development took place. Whereas the telephone and radio hardly existed, while few French Canadians went to school, while mass media was practically non existing, Délia Tétreault, this visionary woman published and launched a magazine—Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News.

This magazine is famous in many ways. Let us note some facts: Rare are those magazines that have survived 90 years. Also rare that a magazine is created, edited, distributed essentially by women. Throughout the decades, it has evolved and adapted. Today, we can be proud of such an accomplishment and it incites us to extend our gratitude to all those women who for 90 years have contributed in editing and promoting the magazine. They all had at heart and on their shoulders the project of their Foundress. On behalf of the Board of Administration, I wish to underline their contribution, particularly all the directresses who succeeded one another. I also thank all the collaborators and the two lay women who work at the office: Carole Guévin and Monique Lagarde. In a more precise and special way, I thank Sister Marie-Paule Sanfaçon who is currently the Directress. Her enthusiasm and energy are contagious and give wings to the magazine.

In the words of Micheline Dumont, Historian, we all know that many countless and discreet actions not mentioned in history books have been determinant in the evolution of persons and societies. Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News have made history! We do not know for how many more years; however, this should not make us sad but rather incite us to sing the Magnificat so dear to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Let us hope we will celebrate the 100th Anniversay. »

[1] Folk group: Light Feet of Laval
[2] Former and current editors with some working team members
Photos Credit:
Sr. Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.

To wrap up this exceptional year of our publication *Le Précurseur / MIC Mission News,* there will be a Christmas concert in the MIC Chapel of Pont-Viau, Laval, on Sunday, December 12, 2010 at 19:30. We invite you all to join us in closing this very special year on a musical note.

A Definitive, Audacious "YES"

By **Monette Ouellette,** M.I.C.

Among the memories of her childhood years, Sr. Patsy Morency remembers with awe and wonder the joyful and festive welcome that her family always displayed for her father's closest friend, Father Guy, a priest of the Society of Foreign Missions who was a missionary in the Philippines. ***When he came over, it was always party time at our house. I always wondered why it was that way for him. One day, when I was five, I dared to tell him that I too would be a missionary like him. Smiling, he answered: First, you must grow up and then we'll see.*** The call to become a missionary was like a tiny seed already planted in the heart of a child.

It was Sunday, June 6, 2010 – In her village church, Patsy radiated her happiness as she stood before her family and friends to publicly declare that she willingly and definitively wants to follow Jesus, poor, chaste and obedient every day of her life and this within the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. It was a grandiose feast in the village as well as in her family. Father Guy was among the guests witnessing a child's dream becoming a reality. This reminded us of a song refrain composed by French Canadian singer Robert Lebel:

A dream is but a dream,
but it could also be
the first word of a letter
to be written in the future.
A dream is but a dream,
but it could also be
a door left ajar
for the future to come in.

The youngest in a family of six children, Patsy observed her parents as they actively took part in the social life of the village and committed themselves to the Christian Community. Through their dedication she soon learned about social injustices and inequality which brought disastrous consequences in the lives of many people.

As a young adult, she joined others of her age as tourist guide at the St. Anne-de-Beaupré Shrine; this helped her pay her way through college. During this period of her life, Patsy's faith deepened. At the Agape-Mission in Quebec, she continued her journey of faith with others and reached out to those who are unaware of Jesus' Presence among us and have not experienced His Love.

Strongly supported by her family and by the Christian Women Movement of her

village, Patsy went to Mexico with other youths. More than ever, she became convinced that deep in her heart there was a calling to go further; but how to respond within the social context of our times? In a spirit of discernment and prayer, Patsy continued to ponder…

After her training in pastoral leadership and social service at Laval University, she became pastoral agent at the Cathedral of her diocese in Edmundston, New Brunswick.

One day, she came across the magazine Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News. Touched by what she read, Patsy decided to communicate with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. She kept contact on a regular basis and decided to ask for admission to the Institute. Her training years to the religious and missionary life began with other MIC companions in Canada and then continued in Peru. There, at the end of her novitiate, she took on her first vows.

AN EVER GROWING CALL

Back in Quebec, Sr. Patsy became a team member of the Pastoral Unit serving the Cote-des-Neiges area in Montreal. She accompanied young adults who wished to live a working experience abroad. With time, she realized she needed to be better prepared to improve her skills and knowledge. She therefore returned to the university to complete her degree in the field of social services.

Though involved in her studies, Patsy did not neglect her religious formation. She attended the MIC International Scholasticate where she took time to look deeper into her desire of consecrating herself definitively to Christ and to His Mission in the world.

Saint Joseph's Church in Madawaska, New Brunswick, was the place where Sr. Patsy was baptized and confirmed. On June 6, 2010, the Christian Community was well prepared to welcome her and to witness her consecration to God. Surrounded by her loved ones, numerous friends, MIC companions and her mother, Yvonne, who always encouraged her daughter to pursue her dream, Sr. Patsy recalled her beloved and deceased father, Rolland, who was a passionate man dedicated to his village and its residents. Serene and reflective, she walked to the altar to publicly express her definitive "YES" to God. The African drums, the flute, the organ resounded throughout the whole church, uplifting hearts and voices to praise the Lord.

During the liturgical celebration, Sr. Patsy received her mandate from her MIC Superior. She has been assigned to be a missionary in Peru. She already knows the culture of the Peruvian people; therefore, this knowledge will facilitate her integration as well as facilitate the mission work the Lord has entrusted into her care.

MIRACULOUSLY HEALED?

At the end of the liturgical celebration, Sr. Patsy presented to the assembly, Audrey, a little five year old girl. A few months after her birth, doctors discovered that she had cancerous brain tumors. Her life was in danger! Sr. Patsy proposed to the family that Audrey be confided to the Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Venerable Délia Tétreault, Foundress of the MIC Community. Today, whether it is considered as a miracle or not, Audrey is a happy little girl, full of life and vitality, bouncing all over the place unaware that she had a difficult beginning.

We have seen, we have witnessed; therefore, we praise the God of Life in a spirit of Thanksgiving. With Délia, we continue her childhood dream: ***Give God children who will sing His Goodness for centuries without end!***

Always and everywhere in the world, the Lord calls young adults, who in the name of Christ, have the courage and audacity to commit themselves definitively and with joy to God's Mission.

[1] Sr. Marie Thérèse Beaudette, Provincial Superior; Sr. Patsy Morency; Msgr. Claude Champagne, O.M.I.

[2] Sr. Patsy and her mother, Yvonne

[3] Five year old Audrey

Photos Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

MIC SISTERS – Final Vows In 2010

In the Gospel, Jesus invites the rich young man as follows: ***If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.*** (Mt 19:21)

This invitation still resounds in the hearts of many young people today. Do we have the courage to respond? In numerous countries, young girls hear the call and say **"YES"** to their Lord.

MIC Sisters who took their final vows in 2010:

January 3	**Chrysanthine Razafindrahety**, Antsirabe, Madagascar
June 6	**Patsy Morency**, Saint Joseph of Madawaska, New Brunswick, Canada
August 8	**María Goretty García**, Pucallpa, Peru
August 15	**Marie-Anne Présumé**, Plaisance, Haiti
August 15	**Marie-Philomène Pierre**, Cap Haitien, Haiti
November 21	**Miriama Ranorosoa**, Antsirabe, Madagascar
November 21	**Augustine Rafenomanantany**, Antananarivo, Madagascar
November 21	**Ravaka Razafindahy**, Tamatave, Madagascar
December 8	**Jocelyn Guieb**, Bulacan, Philippines

Lord, all your children are called to be saints, but some you invite to follow Jesus more closely and intimately. Those whom you have chosen to be consecrated to you, may they be in the Church and for the world witnesses of your universal Love.

Sr. Chrysanthine

Sr. Patsy

Sr. María Goretty

Sr. Marie-Anne

Sr. Marie-Philomène

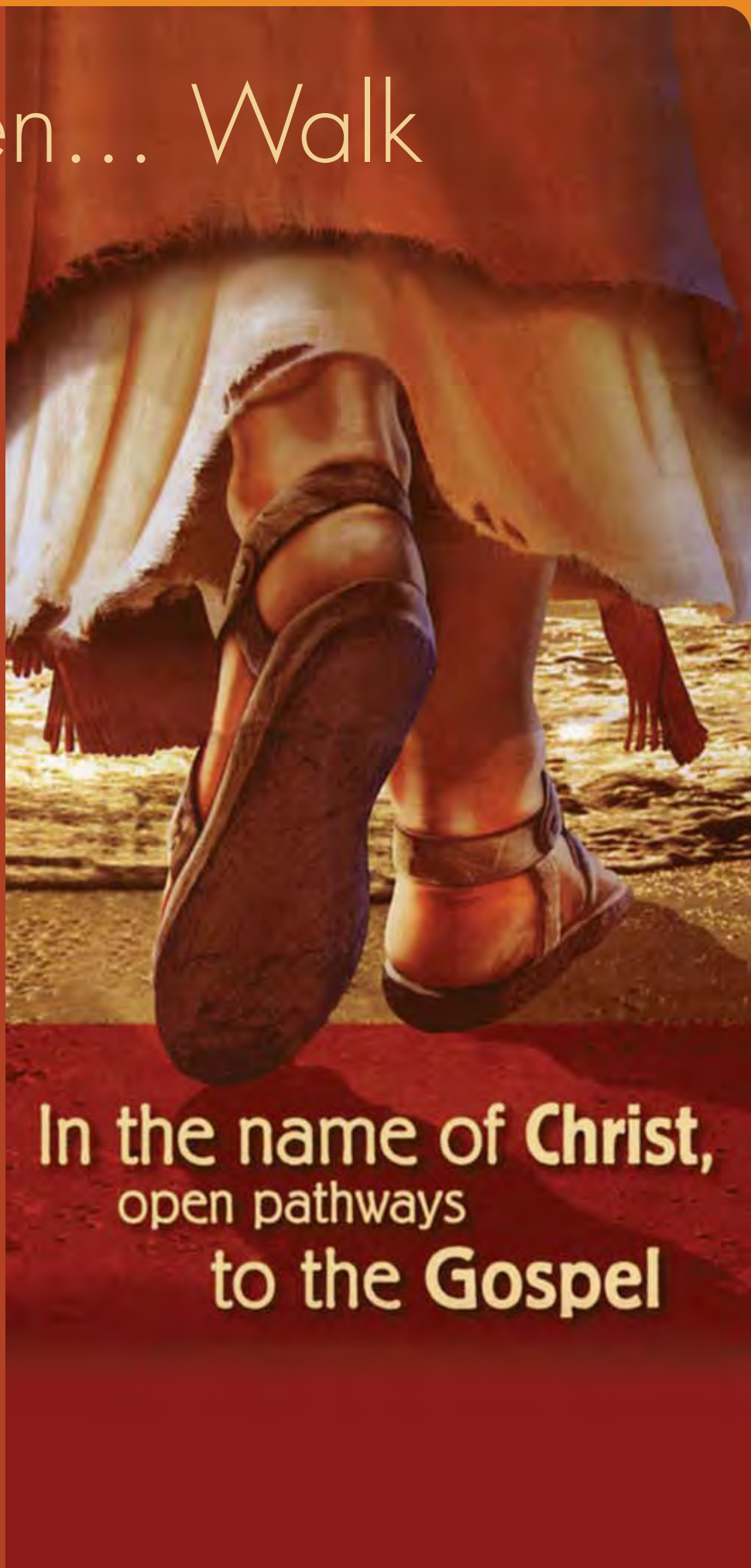
Sr. Jocelyn

Srs. Miriama, Augustine and Ravaka

Stop! Then… Walk

The theme of World Mission Sunday 2010—*In the name of Christ, open pathways to the Gospel*, reflects the In-Focus topics in this issue. During His public life, Jesus walked the roads of Palestine to reach His people and to be with them. Following their Lord, the missionaries speak His words, His message of Love. They are called to walk the many roads that lead them to God's people; attentive to their needs, they bring comfort, support, joy, fraternal love.

More than ever we are called to stop our frenzied running around to simply become aware that a Presence within us is trying to be heard. To ponder upon the meaning of our life, to discover its aspirations and goals brings about a new vision that helps us walk on the roads that lead to true happiness. Dare to open pathways to the Gospel! As a Christian, do I feel this concerns me? To take a step and begin walking in that direction means to go counter-current within a society that hails the easy way of life. To walk on the pathways of Jesus is not an easy mission; however, He is always with us, helping us to sow the seeds of love in the hearts of an ailing humanity.



WOMEN–Agents of SOCIAL CHANGE

The year 2010 will have a special significance for the global women's movement. Their voices will resound in all parts of the world to denounce poverty and violence against women. Numerous activities will unfold under the unifying theme: ***"Until all women are freed... we will walk".*** In this issue we are publishing the second point of the article ***"WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN 2000—CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION".*** The text can be found on the web site: femmes-ministeres.org

By **Micheline Laguë, M.I.C.**
Theology Professor
St. Paul University,
Ottawa, Ontario

We thank her as well as Women & Ministries for authorizing us to publish this article.

Christian women who seek the Kingdom of God opt to take action; they work for more justice in their own milieu; they promote recognition, respect and equal dignity for all human beings. At the same time they maintain that women and men are equal partners. Taking part in the *World March for Women* means making a commitment to change the world; it means wanting to construct a world that is more human. In this case, the international march is Gospel oriented; it is relevant to the social and the ecclesial dimension of our societies.

Mission is the raison d'être of the Church, it is her deepest identity. Acknowledging this central affirmation is to recognize that the mission field is the whole world, it includes all women and men working in different environments and living various situations. This means that the Good News must be presented in words and deeds. The late Pope Paul VI wrote: ***For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new.***

The International Action—World March of Women, represents women from all five continents. Listening to their diverse experiences is to hear their life struggles as difficult as they may be. It is to take seriously the late Pope John-Paul II's statement which recognizes that the human being is the route that the Church must travel in fulfilling its mission, ***it is the primary and fundamental way for the Church.***

On the women's road, human dignity is often hit hard by the existing discrimination against them; in many cases

this is one of the causes of poverty and violence. ***Any discrimination constitutes an absolutely intolerable injustice*** wrote Pope John-Paul II. ***To rediscover and make others rediscover the inviolable dignity of every human person makes up an essential task, in a certain sense, the central and unifying task of the service which the Church and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family.***

Precisely, to banish all forms of discrimination is one of the goals of the WMW. Thus, it is a fundamental duty for women to come together and join their voices with others from the five continents. To strive for social justice in the world where human dignity is taken into account is to accomplish an evangelizing task.

FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

Equity and justice are not always applied in the workplace, particularly between men and women. Well aware of the problems, the Bishops at the Vatican II Council declared: ***To satisfy the demands of justice and equity, strenuous efforts must be made, without disregarding the rights of persons or the natural qualities of each country, to remove as quickly as possible the immense economic inequalities, which now exist and in many cases are growing and which are connected with individual and social discrimination.***

The rise of global capitalism has brought about the feminization of labor. Some adverse results of the global effects are seen in terms of gender discrimination, violence, harassment, etc. Monique Dumais, author of ***Femmes et Pauvreté*** wrote in 1998 that in Canada more that 60% of single mothers live below the poverty line. The resulting impoverishment of women comes from the unpaid 'invisible work'. This represents nearly 11 billion dollars, almost 68% of the value of world production effected by women.

Have these figures changed in ten years? Not really, in 2008 Statistics Canada established the threshold of low income before taxes for one person at $22,171. That individual receives an annual salary of $19,760. before taxes, that is 11% below the low income cut-offs (LICO). Women hold 60% of the minimum wage jobs, this means that the phenomenon of 'feminization of poverty' is largely aligned with the 'feminization of labor'. They also hold but part-time jobs which is often synonymous to insecurity. This double reality: feminization of labor and of poverty speaks volumes about the seriousness of the situation; for women, it is a preoccupation at its highest peak.

[1] Women who are uprooted
Photo Credit:
U.N. Refugee Agency

The social, political and economic roots must be looked at closely; the structural causes of poverty must be addressed. Women must be in the forefront of this struggle, they must deal with the issues of inequality in today's world, pay close attention to the poorest in solidarity and bring them support through concrete actions.

Mary Ann Glendon, Head of the Holy See's Delegation at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) spoke precisely in those terms. Her statement justifies in some way the 'raison d'être' of the WMW involvement. A global mobilization is possible because women have become more aware of the deep rifts between North and South, disparities between men and women. Their claim for more justice and protests against poverty can be justified. Another

[2] Children being displaced.
Photo Credit:
U.N. Refugee Agency

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
Website:
- **Fourth World Conference on Women** Beijing Declaration
- **Mary Ann Glendon** Opening Address at the UN Conference on Women

2

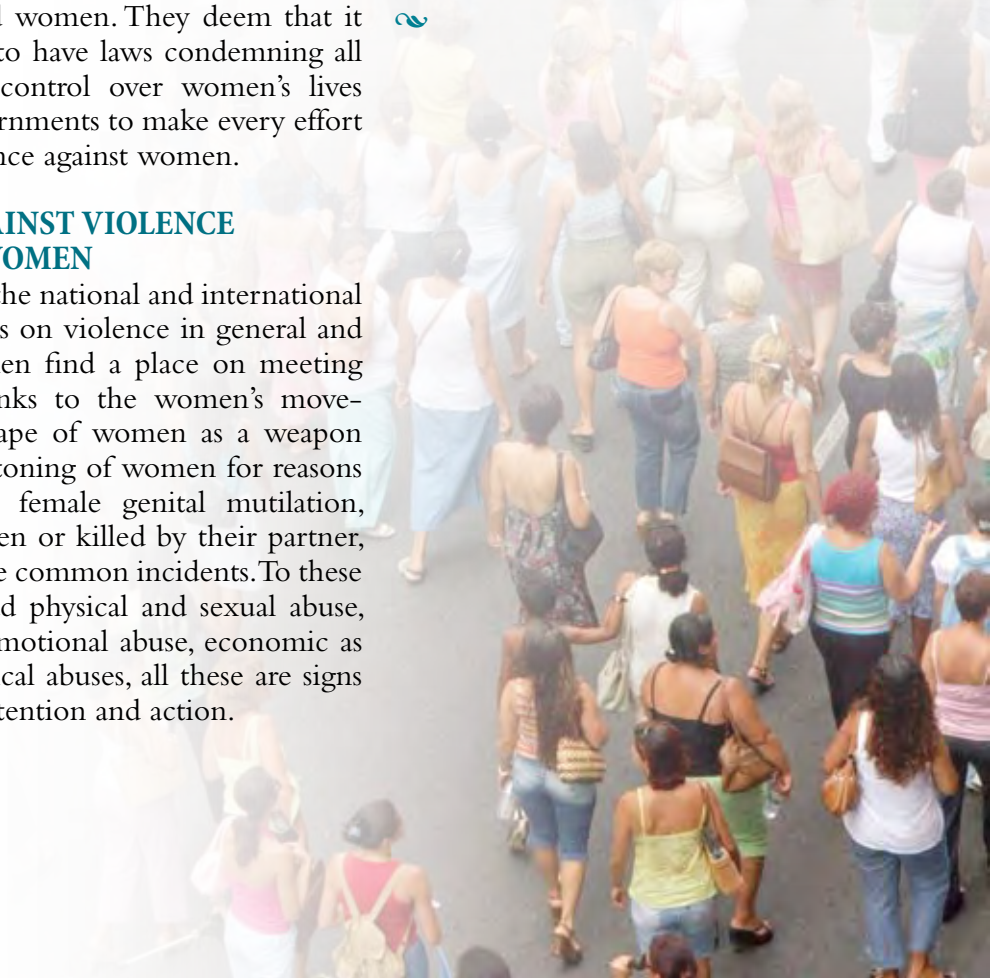
of their concern is the elimination of violence toward women. They deem that it is necessary to have laws condemning all subjugating control over women's lives and ask governments to make every effort to end violence against women.

FIGHT AGAINST VIOLENCE T0WARD WOMEN

At both the national and international levels, themes on violence in general and against women find a place on meeting agendas, thanks to the women's movement. The rape of women as a weapon of war, the stoning of women for reasons of infidelity, female genital mutilation, women beaten or killed by their partner, incest, etc. are common incidents. To these we could add physical and sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse, economic as well as political abuses, all these are signs calling for attention and action.

More aware of this scourge and the extent of its practice, various civil and religious institutions have taken measures and steps to eradicate it. Though some laws have already been implemented, much remains to be done particularly in the light of "conversion". Strength and determination are needed; however, it is in the Gospel that the Church finds its audacity and ethical principles that motivate her to fight against violence. Christians who are dedicated to the cause of women find their source of inspiration in the Message of the Resurrected Christ.

For nearly two centuries, the women's movement has undertaken a long march to improve the status of women. Their success comes from their determination to stand against the sociopolitical and religious structures in their societies. Advocating for their right to education and their right to vote as citizens of a country, women have finally received the acknowledgement of their dignity. By their unwavering decisiveness women have been and remain agents of social change.



THE SOURCE

Deep within our being there is a sacred inviolable Temple; it is a space where mystics stop, drink, celebrate, find fulfillment and taste the Source, the Ineffable. It is the Guha, the Cave of the Heart.[1]

By **Hervé Pichenaud**

About the author:
Qualified in editing and communications, Hervé Pichenaud is currently in his third year of training for the missions abroad as a lay missioner and in partnership with the Foreign Missions Society.

The way to the Cave of the Heart is the point zero of our human consciousness. It is the spiritual center where the soul and its Creator meet. Thus, the real Self recognizes its oneness with the Self of the Universe. Heroic patience is needed to tread the way to the Cave: Accept reality as it is as well as the spiritual inner yearnings; decipher the refusals, the conditionals or reservations; uproot all fears; integrate the past; master the emotions; face one's desires freely; welcome the present unconditionally; take action without agitation. There are no other avenues than to explore the zones of shadows, violence, death, facing these without hiding the truth. To drive out the negatives and say yes to the awareness of the unconscious self. And where is the faith in this journey? Faith activates and sustains the walk, it is the steadfast resolution that supports and reinforces in difficult moments.

THE OTHER SHORE

By stopping, being silent, laying down the shields, the seeker gradually approaches the Cave of the Heart. The emptiness is then filled with the experience of the Divine. Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, entitled Gaudium et Spes states: ***The intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom and needs to be. For wisdom gently attracts the mind of man to a quest and a love for what is true and good. Steeped in wisdom, man passes through visible realities to those which are unseen.***[2] All along this quest, grace and providence are always present; they witness the chosen way to be accurate.

> The intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom.

THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE

For those interested in discovering the meeting point between Hinduism and Christianity, there is an obscure but quite extraordinary monk, Father Henri Le Saux, a French Benedictine monk who immersed himself in Hindu mysticism, the advaita Vedanta, which is the path of knowledge by excellence. Father Henri entered the Cave of the Heart and from then on, nothing was ever the same for him. He became awakened, conscious, a liberated living person (jivanmukta). More than 35 years after his death, Henri Le Saux (also known by the name: swami Abhishiktananda) continues to be an inspiration for those engaged in interreligious monastic dialogues. Up to this day, his spiritual adventure encourages the seekers new ways in the light of multiple religious beliefs which is to be distinguished from syncretism. Up to his very last breath, Father Le Saux claimed his double state as Benedictine monk and as Sannyasin (Hindu wandering monk). Today, Benedictine and Cistercian monks as well as nuns continue the pioneering work of Father Le Saux.

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[1] Shirley du Boulay, *Cave of the Heart: The Life of Swami Abhishiktananda-Henri Le Saux* (Maryknoll, NJ: Orbis Books)
[2] *Gaudium et Spes*, The Dignity of the Mind; Truth; Wisdom – No. 15

Further Reading:
Harry Oldmeadow, *A Christian Pilgrim in India: The Spiritual Journey of Swami Adhishiktamanda (Henri Le Saux)* – (The Library of Perennial Philosophy)

Walking on the Road to God's Kingdom

If we do not see something, does it mean that it does not exist? Where are the young people in our Church? Do they exist? Of course they do! Every year, many young adults decide to take part in the catechumenate, a chosen way to foster their faith. The candidates receive a formation through which the faith gradually takes root and matures. Often in their twenties, the participants are accompanied on their faith journey. Sylvie tells her story.

By **Sylvie-Nuria Noguer**

To witness my faith journey as a newly baptized adult allows me to recall the steps that have led me to the baptismal font. The Blessed Sacrament Sanctuary in Montreal, Quebec, welcomed me on the night of the Easter Vigil of this year.

For so many years, I thought I was alone. It took time before I could open my heart to the Love of Jesus and the Father. I remember that during one of the rituals of Christian Initiation of Adults called 'scrutinies' or soul searching, while I was standing before the altar, a thought came to my mind: ***You had to strip away many layers before reaching this point.*** Yes, many times God's Divine Touch manifested itself deep within me.

I was raised in France, in a family who defined "belief" as a weakness. Yet, at a young age I felt the Presence of God and could easily be in touch with my deceased loved ones. I remember my first

[1] Baptism of Sylvie Nuria
Photo Credit: Michel Cojan

prayer was the "Our Father"—where had I learned it? Kneeling by my bed, I would ask the Lord to protect my friend who was suicidal.

I was always impressed by the faith sharing of my Christian friends. As young adults we formed a group called: ***The illuminated ones.*** Our motto was: ***Do not leave behind the Essential.*** Eric, who became my Godfather, was a member of the group. At our monthly meetings, we looked over our life experiences and discussed the existential questions that welled up. I remember how the notion of being free to choose and love triggered a certain 'vertigo' sensation.

No matter in which country I happened to be, my steps would often take me to the doors of churches. During my trips to Asia, South America, Australia, Africa, I would look for a Christian, Hindu, Buddhist place of worship. I felt drawn to live the Mystery in a more profound way. I searched for my inner self; I now understand that I was searching for God. I often attended Mass alone, incognito. Many times, God's Word echoed in my heart and moved me to tears.

Deep within I could not let go, I could not abandon myself. To my friends I would say: ***I have never knelt before anyone.*** Though I attended retreats, went to meetings on the subject of Christian commitment and long lasting development (where I met my Godmother, Mylène) my 'ego' kept control. I would listen and try to follow the Word of God but I could not live the faith, I could not witness the faith. Why? I did not dare believe in God's Love; even as an adult, I did not dare to make a choice contrary to my family's beliefs. Finally, at one point, I wondered why I could not join the Church.

Two years ago, I came to live in Quebec. I did not know, back then, that I would ask to be baptized. Even the day before the request, which was the anniversary of Saint Paul's conversion, I had no idea. Within my armor, God's Spirit was working its way through. ***Love is not a victory march, it's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah*** wrote Leonard Cohen. Yes, something of my shell, of my resistance, had to be broken; I had to disarm before consenting. Deep within me, where no other could enter or reach, I was moved by a burning sense of reconciliation and love—thus, I asked for Baptism. ***Together on the road to God's Kingdom*** is the catechumen's motto, together we walk and the journey is light.

Deep within, I could not let go.

At first, when I would speak to my family and friends about my wish to be baptized, I was not always understood or supported. My faith was fragile like a young shoot and I felt the blows. Father Antoine-Emmanuel proposed that I consider their remarks or attitudes within another perspective: ***You are affected by their reactions, but don't forget that they know you. By your decision, you also affect them perhaps more than you can imagine.*** These words changed my way of looking at things. During the months of preparation to baptism, I felt the Spirit of God at work within me. I had the joy of being accompanied by Sister Josepha of the Monastic Communities of Jerusalem; her community also supported me spiritually.

Today, when I speak about my faith journey, I see in the eyes of my interlocutor an awakening and interest. I capture the opportunities to speak about the Essential in the midst of confusion and whirlwind activities.

How long do we remain neophyte? I hope it lasts a whole lifetime. I think of Marie, Jerome, Pablo, Guillaume, Virginie… and our guides: André Gadbois and Gisèle Pellerin. Our group has decided to continue journeying together, we will meet on a regular basis with Gilles Leclair, our spiritual guide.

Beyond the Photograph

By **Monique Bigras,** M.I.C.

Christ-mas! Lights, stars, wreaths, garlands, snow white trimmings and tucked underneath a tree: a man, a woman, a baby… apparently a family.

This familiar scene, always the same yet always new, we take for granted. But for William, a five year old boy, there are questions. For him, all is new; he scrutinizes every detail, makes discoveries but also needs explanations.

It was holiday time, not so long ago. I remember so well the scene. William was there, stretched out on the floor in front of the lighted tree with his tiny face resting in both hands. As I watched him, he turned to me with an inquisitive look and said:

- *This is not baby Jesus, it's only a doll!*
- Y*es, it's true, it is just a doll.* Taken aback, I didn't know exactly what to say, then I had a flash: *Tell me William, in your room I saw a nice photo of your mother on your dresser.*
- *Yes!*
- *It's a photo, but nevertheless it is your mother, isn't it?*
- *Yes, it is my mother.*
- *Why do you keep her photo?*
- *Because when I look at it, I remember my mother.*
- *Well, you see, it is the same with the doll. The doll is not the real Jesus, but it reminds us of baby Jesus. It reminds us of praying and talking with Jesus. The doll is a reminder that Jesus loves you very much. Your mother loves you and so does Jesus.*
- *Wow, that's a real good idea! I will often think of my friend Jesus.*

Still looking at me, he smiled happily and his eyes lit up as he turned his little face to look at Jesus. And my heart also lit up with joy!

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

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

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May the Divine Infant of Bethlehem grant you good health and bestow on you His abundant Blessings.

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Christmas in Malawi, Africa

A missionary in Malawi and Zambia for more than thirty years, Sr. Yvonne briefly speaks to us about Christmas in Africa.

By **Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.**

Christmas in Africa is first and foremost a religious feast though some commercial elements have also been introduced on the continent. It all depends where we are. In Malawi, people in remote villages celebrate simply, while those in cities prepare early to highlight this event. As of mid-December, the cities bubble with excitement. Stores are decorated and along the roads, improvised markets offer their products; prices vary to suit the budgets and good food is provided for all: chickens, meat, fruits and sometimes a few sweets.

CHRISTMAS – A RELIGIOUS FEAST

The Africans are deeply and naturally spiritual. Those who are Christians know very well that Christmas is above all a religious celebration, highlighting the birth of Jesus, their Lord and Savior. Going to church is generally the goal of Christmas. People from remote villages walk kilometers, often in the rain, to come to their prayer center and to participate in the liturgical celebrations.

December 24th, all commercial activities cease, they give way to the religious aspect of the feast. At the end of the day, crowds flock to the theatrical Nativity scene. To the sound of music and drums, the characters proceed into the church which is already packed with people. Nothing is missing: angels, shepherds, three kings, the Holy Family, they all walk toward the African style crèche. Baby Jesus tells us that he too is present; his cooing sounds catch the assembly's attention.

"Maria, Mama bilong mipela"
Artist: Sr. Maria V. Galem, F.M.M.

The solemn Mass lasts approximately three hours: readings, songs, dances…we never get tired! Small children sleep on benches or on the floor. The adults cram on to the benches, the more the merrier. If there are no benches, the floor is the next best place and they sit comfortably close to each other. Christmas songs and hymns of the Nativity, sung in the local languages, vibrate throughout the church area, joyful drumming is heard miles away. The homily of the day is focused on the meaning of the coming of Jesus. It is a real celebration!

After this long prayerful celebration, people return home and usually gather with members of the extended family to continue the feast in whatever way they can. Their merry conversations take on the color of the season and topics abound. On this day, children are the center of attention and they marvel at what they see and hear. Christmas is the Good News for all God's children around the world.

Stop—Be Still!

No matter the country where the MIC Sisters work, if they are involved in education they always provide the students with some "time-out" for their spiritual life and reflection. At Good Hope School in Hong Kong this is a tradition that is cherished. Notwithstanding the few Catholics, Sr. Jacintha Henry, M.I.C. goes with a group of students to a place where nature and silence are conducive to reflection…

By **Aida Sabandal,** M.I.C.

Originally from Mbuba, Tanzania, Sr. Jacintha has been teaching English at Good Hope School for the past nine years. Her inculturation did not come with a magic wand. She took courses in Cantonese for three years. Gradually, she became more familiar with the signs and tones which are so different from her language the Swahili; with time she adjusted to the Chinese culture.

TEACHER AT GOOD HOPE SCHOOL

Deeply committed to her faith, Sr. Jacintha always dreamed of a missionary life to serve the poor. What a surprise for her when she was asked to go teach English in the big city of Hong Kong. With all her heart, she committed herself; students and teachers became her friends and trusted her sincerity. Sr. Jacintha has only one wish and that is to take her share of responsibility in the integral development of each student. When invited by the students to spend time with them on recollection days, she accepts. This year, the chosen theme is: ***The Meaning of Life***, a subject that interests people of all faiths. The students love to share and discuss on such themes.

A PERFECT TIME FOR SHARING

At Saint Paul's retreat house, in Sheung Shui, the students began the day with a personal prayer after which they came together. Alternately, each one lighted a candle and told her story about the meaning of life. Everyone listened attentively and with respect. The next day, a film was presented: ***Tuesdays with Morrie*** – a true story which touched the hearts. The film portrays a young journalist who reconnects with a former professor and famous scholar, Morrie, who has an incurable disease; notwithstanding his pain, he remains positive and joyful so as not to be a burden to others. The students were asked to remember one sentence that Morrie said, explain why it touched them and how they related it to their own present life. The sharing made them realize the beauty of the NOW, the PRESENT MOMENT.

SOME OF THEIR REMARKABLE INSIGHTS

- At times, we cannot believe what we see, but we must believe what we feel.
- The most important thing in life is to learn to love and allow Love to transform you.
- If you do not have the love and support of your family, then you have nothing. Love is of utmost importance!
- Before you die, forgive; forgive everyone…
- Life does not end with death, relationships continue.

Living in a non-Christian environment, these young girls need silence to deepen their understanding of life, delve into their inner self and become strong with convictions that will help them confront life's challenges. Sister Jacintha sows the seeds of love and thanksgiving in the heart of these young people whom God sends her way.

CAPTURE THE OPPORTUNITY

Young people love these "come together with the Lord". The chosen place, away from the hectic city life, is favorable to reflection. Sister Jacintha is often requested to come on those retreats. A teacher, who was recently baptized, asked Sister to assist her at a youth retreat—the theme was: *Find God in your daily life*. In a silent, prayerful, reflective atmosphere, the students deepened their knowledge of Scripture passages. In the evening, scripture games, mimes and visual imagery revealing some parables of Jesus were on the agenda; students greatly appreciate these activities. Far from the noise, they can concentrate and open their hearts to the universal Love of God. They pray for all the nations of the world without forgetting their own families.

A TOUCHING TESTIMONY

The students asked Sr. Jacintha to speak to them about her life in Africa. In all simplicity she opened her heart:

My Provincial Superior had once asked me if I would accept going back to my country, Tanzania, to open a new mission post. With enthusiasm I had said yes. I was really happy to return to my native land and help others to appreciate their home land. But God did not see it that way.

Approximately one month later, I received from our General Superior another mandate, this time it was for a mission 'ad extra': Hong Kong! Humanly speaking it was difficult to believe this and to take a decision. I knew absolutely nothing of the Chinese culture…God is so unpredictable! He quickly changes our little human plans to lead us into His Great Plan. When I took my final vows, I had sincerely and trustingly said: **Yes, Lord, Your ways will be…my ways!** *I never thought He would take me so far.*

My nine years in Hong Kong are going by very quickly. As a teacher I sometimes feel like a mother watching her children grow-up and becoming adults. It's fantastic! I deeply appreciate our conversations, your friendship and trust. My presence at Good Hope is not limited to teaching; I want to be available to you, to be a presence that communicates Christ in your hearts. I feel the students here need to have someone in whom they can rely and trust. I know this mutual trust cannot be built in one day…

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1-2 Sr. Jacintha with her students
Photos Credit: MIC

Sister Jacintha then related how she met the Lord in her life and she spoke about her native land. The day ended with a prayer of Thanksgiving.

Whether at Good Hope School or at Tak Oi which are two schools for girls, these youngsters love and appreciate these spiritual moments; such *"stops"* along the way help them better understand the meaning of their own personal life.

Overloaded Suitcases

At the age of six, Yolaine Lavoie dreamed of Africa. Her dream has finally come true. On December 8, 2009, Sr. Yolaine officially receives her assignment for the Cameroon. She already had been forty years in Madagascar but she takes up the challenge and says YES to the call…

By **Marie-Paule Sanfaçon,** M.I.C.

Her long and beautiful mission with the Madagascan people provided Sr. Yolaine enormous teaching experiences with the youth and exceptional teaching tools which she invented to help the students better understand the Christian mystery. The visual aids enhanced her catechetical instructions and mission awareness presentations. With joy, she now fills her suitcases with all her inventions. Cameroonians are awaiting her arrival; children of all ages are looking forward to meeting her and are eager to hear more about Jesus and His Love for them. With her overloaded suitcases filled with teaching aids, Sr. Yolaine takes the flight KLM 274 Montreal-Douala.

Liturgical dances are incorporated in worship services, they enhance the prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

A WARM WELCOME

It is on the feast of the Immaculate Conception that she lands on the soil of her new country—what a great day to begin her mission! Father Serge-Julien Tchinde, pastor at Mbouo greets her with enthusiasm. From Sr. Yolaine's chronicle I draw her story: *On the way to my new destination, Father wants to show me everything that is to be seen during our one day drive. Finally, we arrive home and Sr. Claire Asselin, a Sister of St. Anne, greets me with joy; with her I will share the mission work. I often have the impression of being in Madagascar. I am adapting quickly, I feel at home here. Praise and dance are heartfelt expressions of the Cameroonian people. Liturgical dances are incorporated in worship services, they enhance the prayers of praise and thanksgiving. On Sunday, Father Serge introduces me to the parishioners who welcome me wholeheartedly. After Mass, the agricultural/trade fair begins at Bandjoun. Country folks expose their products and crafts—it's party time with singing and dancing troops.*

Successive meetings take place: Religious, priests and nuns of the Diocese of Bafoussam come together to discuss important issues; married couples meet to share the Word of God and give each other helpful advice when needed. Liturgical groups practice their role, they learn to lead the Congregation into song and dance, the assembly cannot remain still—hands and feet rhythmically sway along. What a life-giving ambiance! The Lord certainly must love those happy 'young of heart' who joyfully celebrate Him.

A DYNAMIC METHOD

As I began contacting the youth, I also began opening up my suitcases. Yes, I had brought along many biblical games, with these the children quickly learn the important facts and events of the life of Jesus and Mary, and also of the Old Testament.

It was my first time to teach these young ones and I felt somewhat nervous. They were approximately 150 students before me. I divided them into two teams so as to incite competition. Each team selected three representatives who would answer the

questions. The teams had great supporters behind them—when they answered correctly, the applause and cheers were loud and clear. Joy and ambition filled the air. These biblical games are precious tools to revise the three years' compulsory studies leading to Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation.

Before the final examinations, Sr. Claire and I planned a gathering for all the Catechists of the Diocese. We presented them with documents, books, and sets of biblical games that would help them prepare their students to take their final exams.

GREAT CELEBRATIONS

The month of May is harvest time. It's the most appropriate time to collect funds to repair schools and churches: roughcasting walls, cementing floors, etc. The feast goes on the whole month and I was mandated to collect the funds that come in every day.

May 28 was the great day—76 catechumens received Baptism; the Bishop of our Diocese, Dieudonné Watio, was the Presider. Then 113 youths and adults received their First Communion; 73 were Confirmed. A solemn Mass was celebrated to highlight these important faith-filled journeys. Though rain was abundant on that day, everyone found a place under the tents to enjoy the festive meal. No matter the weather, Cameroonians love to celebrate and they do so wholeheartedly.

ACCULTURATION

After these three months of intense apostolic activities, Sr. Claire and I felt the need to take some time-out for renewal; three days of recollection at the Notre Dame de Koutaba Monastery was an enriching experience. Those days of peace and tranquility revitalized us and helped us to pursue our missionary endeavours. Yaounde was next on our agenda. We took part in the General Assembly of the Major Superiors in the Cameroon; approximately 150 religious, priests and nuns work in this country. Such an occasion opened me to the ecclesial life of the Cameroon; the lecturer presented an overview of the existing sects in the country and the values they advocate. He also spoke about the dominant values of the culture and tradition of the Cameroonians. He presented the positive and negative aspects of the traditional African religion. For me, this was a great cultural immersion; I have been enriched by these conferences.

I still have much to discover and gradually I have been emptying my suitcases of their treasures. However, these will be replaced by the precious learning gems I am acquiring here in my new country. I have loved the years I worked with the Madagascan people and I am now developing a love for the Cameroonian culture.

[1] Sr. Yolaine

[2] A class in catechesis

Photos Credit: MIC

OUR MISSIONARIES INVITE YOU

314 Cote Saint Catherine Road, Montreal, Quebec

Come visit the Délia Tétreault Center!

Saint Viateur Parish in Outremont, Qc and our Institute were both founded in the same year – 1902. This coincidence touched the heart of Mrs. Claudette Beaudin, a parishioner, who decided to create stronger links between the two groups.

Her wish was to make known the Missionary Institute and its works to her co-parishioners: *You have a wealth of mission experience and it must be shared with the people of our milieu.* Mrs. Beaudin made the first contact and visited the MIC Délia Tétreault Center. She was offered a guided tour of the exhibition *Sunshine in our Luggage* and visited the art gallery depicting Délia Tétreault's life and her Institute.

Mrs. Beaudin's enthusiasm has been passed on. Groups of parishioners have been coming for the guided tour which unfolds as follows:

- Brief history of Délia Tétreault's life, the foundation and the unfolding years of the Institute.
- A guided tour of the museum which ends up in Mother Délia's room where she lived and worked.
- The art gallery—a delight to all who come; each symbolic painting reveals an aspect of Délia's life.

This interesting tour can be completed at Pont-Viau, Laval, where the tomb and heart of Délia Tétreault are kept in a small shrine.

The Délia Tétreault Center is open to all and at any time of the year. You can plan a group visit or some personal time for yourself. You are all welcome!

Please communicate with:
Sr. Marie-Hélène Roy, M.I.C.
Tel: 514-495-1551
E-mail: tetreaultdelia@yahoo.ca

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!

Rose-Philomène Gédéon, M.I.C. (center)
Trou-du-Nord, Haiti

Well qualified in the field of education with an experience in directing the Mother Délia Institution (school in Haiti), Sr. Rose-Philomène accepted to go to another country, namely Madagascar. In her new milieu, she continues teaching and getting acquainted with another culture.

Lucette Gilbert, M.I.C.
Saint-Prime, Quebec

For many years, Sister Lucette travelled the roads of Quebec to promote the spirit of mission in the various dioceses of her home country. She is now returning to Haiti and will work in solidarity with our Haitian Sisters who are gradually overcoming the aftermaths of the earthquake.

Hélène Gemme, M.I.C. (left)
Ange-Gardien, Quebec

With many years of experience in Africa, Sister Hélène is returning to Zambia where she will temporarily give a helping hand; from there, she will travel to Mzuzu, Malawi, where the community is awaiting her arrival with joy.

Noelline Rasoafara, M.I.C. (center)
Antsirabe, Antananarivo, Madagascar

For so long, Sr. Noelline has been dreaming of a mission 'ad extra'. The hour has finally come: she received her mandate for Chantal, Haiti. As a nurse, she will serve the people with much love and care; her experience in accounting will also be very much appreciated.

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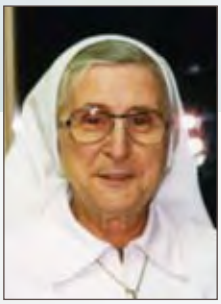
Dawn of a New Life

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

Délia Tétreault



Juliette Deschênes, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte Juliette)
1911-2010
Quebec City, QC

Only God knows the traces we leave behind. Wisdom has spoken and we recognize Sr. Juliette. Fifth in a family of eight children, her childhood years were cheerful even though illness and mortality were family trials she experienced. These inspired her to become a nurse; her competence and sympathetic ways touched many hearts and healed many of their physical illnesses. When the first contingent of MIC missionaries left for Haiti, she was among them; her devotedness toward the sick and poor was remarkable. Later, as Provincial Superior in Canada she was known for her encouraging words and discerning spirit. Sr. Juliette lived the final years of her life with serenity and prayerfully with Mary.

Marguerite Hétu, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint Robert)
1912-2010
Saint-Sulpice, QC

Marguerite was the last born in a family of eleven children. During her primary education, she met the MIC Sisters who came to her school to speak about the missions and the Holy Childhood Association. One of her brothers entered the Society of Foreign Missions and she asked to be admitted at our MIC formation house. Well qualified, Sr. Marguerite taught at our Granby School. At the age of 36 she left for Haiti where she devoted much of her time to the Legion of Mary. In 1961, she was elected General Assistant; no matter her work, she always kept in touch with the young Haitian Sisters. She lived a full and happy life.

Candide Pellerin, M.I.C.
(Sr. Candide-de-Jésus)
1917-2010
Saint Boniface, QC

Love in all things, this is what characterized the life of Sr. Candide. She had fourteen siblings; her parents were loving and vigilant. At the primary school, she met the MIC Sisters and was impressed by them. After her entry at our Institute she assumed various responsibilities: Sr. Candide worked for our magazine as a promoter; she also served in our houses of St. Jean, Granby, Quebec and Outremont. In 1964 she was elected General Councilor. Her mission land was Haiti where she worked seventeen years. Sr. Candide's welcoming attitude was appreciated by her MIC Sisters as well as the Haitian people. At the end of her life she prayed, had a welcoming smile and expressed confidence in a loving God.

Carmen Castonguay, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte Flavie)
1919-2010
Edmunston, New Brunswick

Following her parents' example, Carmen quickly learned to reach out to others. Engaged and ready to be married she doubted about her future—there was a deep desire in her heart to speak of God's Love for all. At 25, she left behind her treasures and entered religious life. In the Philippines, Sr. Carmen encountered people living as squatters at Intramuros-Manila. Her deep faith led her to speak and act on their behalf; she defended their rights. The local people called her *The Angel of Sapang Palay*. Her motto was: I can have faith and hope, but the most important is Love. Sr. Carmen witnessed this Love for the Filipino people until the very end of her life.

*Join us in celebrating the 90th Anniversary of our mission magazine: Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News. How can you take part? For only **$1** per month, a subscription would bring the Good News to your household and to various parts of the world.*

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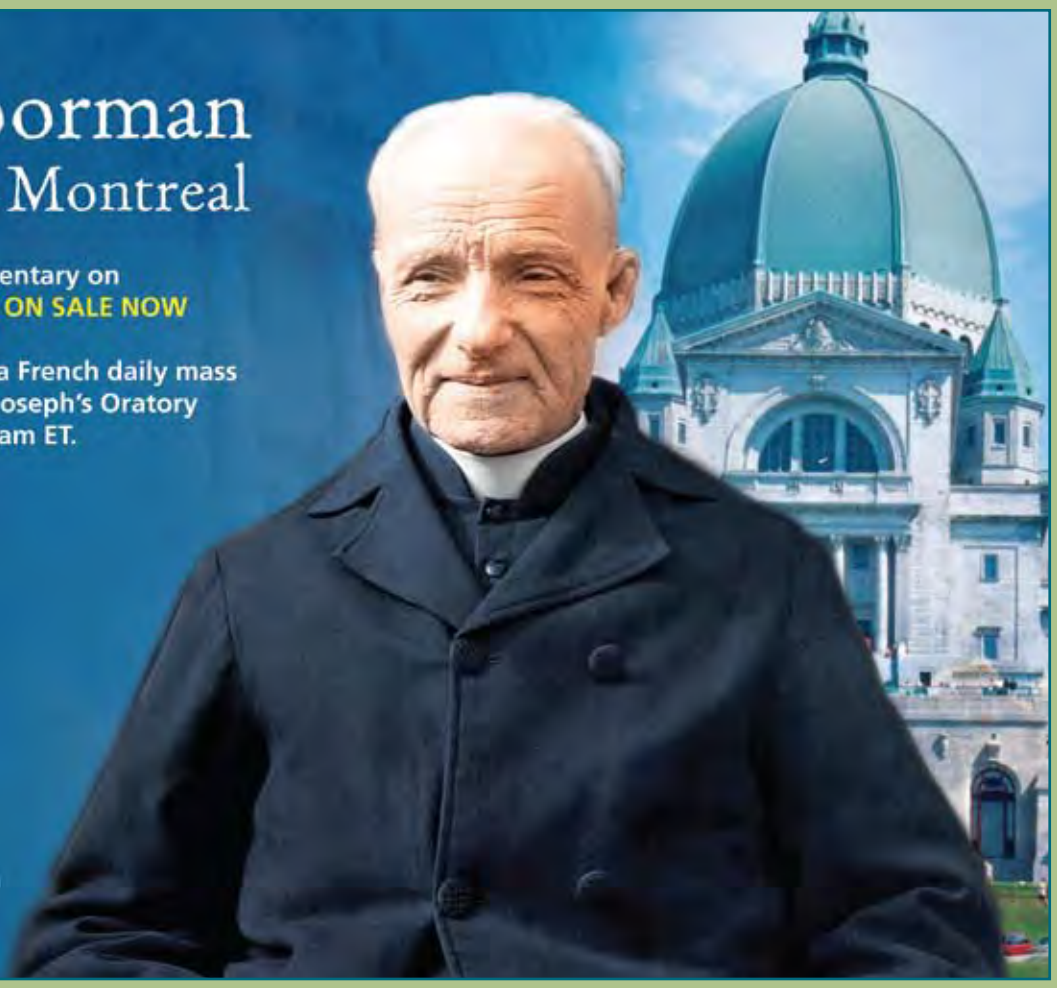

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N.B. The publicity ad — *Vacances Arc En Ciel* which appeared in the French magazine Le Précurseur (Vol. 53, No. 2 — avril • mai • juin 2010) and its English version MIC Mission News (Vol. 37, No. 2 — April • May • June 2010); as well as their ad in the 2010-2011 calendar, does not commit to anything the MIC Missionary Press — the editors of the above two publications.

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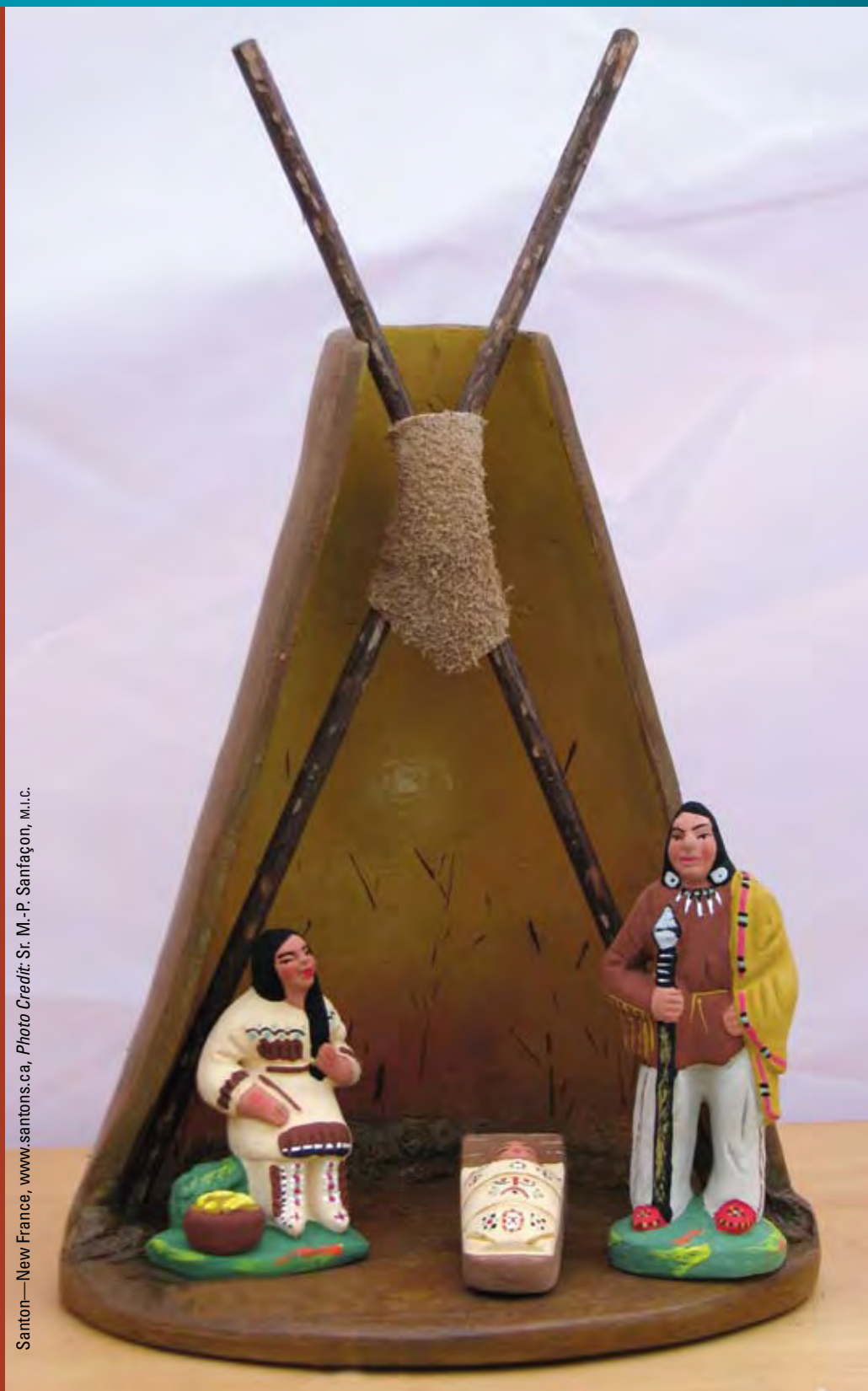

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