

MIC

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MISSION NEWS

To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

PHILIPPINES

A TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

CANADA

EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS — CALGARY

IN FOCUS

To DIG WELLS OF HOPE

PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

APRIL — WE PRAY FOR THOSE
WHO DO NOT YET KNOW CHRIST

*By the proclamation of the Gospel
and the witness of their lives, may all
missionaries bring Christ to those
who do not yet know Him.*

MAY — WE PRAY FOR
THE CHURCH IN CHINA

*May the Lord help the Church in
China persevere in fidelity to the
Gospel and grow in unity.*

JUNE — WE PRAY FOR
MISSIONARY VOCATIONS

*We ask the Holy Spirit to bring forth
from our Christian Communities many
missionaries who are ready to be fully
consecrated to spreading the Kingdom
of God.*

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

READERS' CORNER

At The Deepest Level

The day of our birth God granted us a tool, a tool I would suggest similar to a pickaxe. Throughout the years we will need it to dig the well within ourselves; for within the depth of our being resides purity—the pure water of Life.

A pickaxe? A very practical instrument in springtime; however it cannot do the work by itself, someone must handle it just as the water carrier must lower his bucket into the well.

For our life to be a source of happiness, God wants our collaboration. He urges us to dig the well of His Kingdom. In some places, the earth is dry and hostile. With a hopeful heart, we begin the task but meager results can be discouraging. We begin to doubt... even doubt God's Love. When all hope has vanished, our faithful God responds to our prayers. A spring of water gushes forth, it overflows and blesses our efforts. It is important to never abandon the task but to sustain our motivation to continue the excavation work so that we can reach the deepest level of our commitment.

Many small communities in the Church today are of that caliber. Apparently, nothing seems to be happening but an in-depth work is taking place. We could speak of the catechetical courses in parishes where the Word of God is planted in the heart of young people and gradually transforming them into convinced Christians. There are the small basic Catholic communities where the Eucharistic Bread is broken and shared; there are also many groups of believers who come together to share the Word of God and to celebrate "koinonia"—the community; there are people who come together to reach out to the less fortunate. Perhaps the stone churches are emptying but tiny fresh buds are appearing—signs of life and of a promising future.

My pickaxe in hand and—Oh! Oh! Surprise! The soil has yielded! There is water! It is gushing out, it is overflowing... somewhat like our joy at the beginning of the spring season. It is the joy of being Resurrected.

Together, let us go deeper into our wells of hope!

Marie-Paule Sanjean, m.i.c.

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.

**Gabriel Clément,
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, QC**

I was deeply touched by the article entitled "Mahereza" which was published in the April-June 2010 issue. I wish to express my admiration by sending you a donation. May it be a sign of my appreciation for all the good work you are achieving to improve humanity's welfare. You are the breath of the future.

Jean Grou, Quebec, QC

Congratulations to all those who have kept your mission magazine alive. The longevity of *Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News* is truly an accomplishment and praiseworthy.

Réal Germain, St-Jérôme, QC

Your article "A Reality That Hurts" which appeared in the July-August 2010 issue greatly impressed me: children without a school due to the devastating earthquake are traumatized and their educators have difficulty dealing with all the problems. You need financial help to rebuild and solidify the structures. I am a retired teacher and feel called to participate in offering a modest contribution together with my daily prayers.

Percy Trottier, Pointe-Claire, QC

Your magazine is the best that I receive. The stories are all touching; keep up the good work. Remember me and my family in your prayers.



André Gadbois

ONLY ONE WELL IS ETERNAL

To think the impossible is to be faithful in inventing new ways of being and of doing—the faithful is not one who does not change with the times, but is someone who while remaining faithful will creatively invent or reinvent. (Msgr. Paul Emile Charbonneau)¹

¹ Charbonneau, Msgr. Paul Emile, *The Great Call of Vatican II*, Novalis, 2008, 7

² Grand'Maison, Jacques, *Société laïque et christianisme*, Novalis 2010, 10

Temples, churches are sold and transformed, religious education no longer has its place in schools, vocation to the priesthood has declined dramatically, the heritage of religious communities and their members are melting away before our very eyes, the crucifix is contested at the National Assembly, the Church as institution is no longer a point of reference, except on rare occasions. *A secular society is a new historical reality in Quebec. Our fundamental identity is no longer religious. Nowadays, the majority of Quebecers do not define themselves as FRENCH CANADIANS ROMAN CATHOLICS even though this heritage is not as dead as we think.*² Life in Quebec has ceased to beat to the rhythm of the Catholic doctrine and the Magisterium. We could say of the Catholic religion in Quebec as we sometimes say in funeral homes: *She left us so quickly!*

Yet, for centuries, this Institution called the Catholic Church has generously treated the sick, educated the children, consoled the afflicted, cleared and cultivated the land, stood-up for the French language... In the name of the Holy Trinity, so many religious have given their lives

to work for the reign of God to come. Millions of priests have offered millions of Masses, baptized and heard confessions. How many sacrifices were made to build the churches? Multitudes of people gathered for the midnight Mass. What processions down the streets on Corpus Christi Sunday! What pride to see those hundred or more church steeples! And the solid unifying doctrine written in the *Petit catéchisme de la province du Québec* helped us understand our self-identity and that of each other.

A BLESSED FISSURE

In October 1962, a holy man's eyes were opened by the Spirit of the Resurrected Christ. His surname was John and he saw the fissure deep in the well which was running dry. He understood that the precious treasure of the faith cannot be kept and nourished by a past history; without hesitation and fear, realities of our era had to be faced and dealt with. This particular age was in need of a new well where women and men could come; and in the manner of Jesus, speak with the Samaritan, pay attention to the person who comes to the well rather

than being attentive to the law, the doctrine, uniformity and appearances. The new well has given us sixteen refreshing orientations in documents voted by 95% of the Council Fathers. They voted 'yes' in the hope that the heart of each Christian would be touched and opened to the poor, would be more patient to establish dialogue, would be more prayerful, would be true to the Eucharist, would be more hopeful than fearful. The accomplished task generated admiration, enthusiasm, hope, and creativity for more than twenty years, then skillfully and consciously the refreshing orientations were wiped off like water on a baby's forehead.

Instead of digging deeper into the well with men and women willing to give priority to the poor, the outcast, the assaulted, the Institution with its leaders and many of its members have chosen to maintain the status quo and the rigidity of the law hoping these will resolve humanity's quest for answers. Have they forgotten that the well can run dry?

COURAGEOUS PEOPLE KEEP DIGGING

My joy and my hope are restored when here and there I discover new wells with refreshing water welling up for our era. These wells are being dug by Christians from all walks of life; they are men and women of good will who are seeking to quench the thirst for dignity and happiness hidden within each one of us. How rewarding to come across men and women who, though away from the official Institution, are in search of fraternal communities and practice the Gospel values in their everyday life. How inspiring to witness the many discreet ways of reaching out in solidarity and seeing small Christian communities of twenty come together to share the Word and the Body of Christ, where they freely speak out in favor of Justice, Peace and the Environment. Currently, shale gas wells are troubling but so are the wells

of inequality, recklessness, unawareness. However, I deeply believe that the OTHER WELL, the awakened awareness, will one day unite us all to drink from the Water of Life. Then Humanity will celebrate and hopefully the Church will have contributed along WITH the men and women of good will without exclusion... because it is for them all that the true Pastor has shed His Blood. ☪



The Hidden Treasure

Becoming aware of our inner being is to discover a hidden treasure. Nicole Rochon, who is a retired Air Canada flight attendant, has made that experience. On a trip to South America, she met a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception; this encounter led her to see the world differently. She shares her experience...

By *Nicole Rochon,*
Lay missionary in Hong Kong

I was asked to witness how, as a lay missionary, I came to discover the spirituality of Thanksgiving. At first, I was enthused about the idea but then became hesitant. I decided to hush my irrational fear and let my heart speak. In retrospect, I now realize that I could not have lived my life without a meaningful and profound spirituality. It is precisely the influence of such a spirituality that oriented me towards a mission project in Hong Kong.

Inspired by a motivating spirituality
I wanted to embrace the whole world.

MY SOURCES

Looking back, I remember that even at a young age my life was imbued with a spirituality that had no name. It was nourished by my faith, by my love for all living things, by my human and Christian values, and by my participation at the Eucharistic celebrations. When I was young, I always marveled at the beauties of nature, the immensity of the oceans and of the sky. New discoveries left me in awe, the world of the arts and music attracted me, human beings from the smallest to the greatest I admired. Briefly, I wanted to embrace the whole world; such an expression of love

came forth from a spirituality that was rooted within me.

INSPIRED BY A DYNAMIC SPIRITUALITY

It was vibrant, full of life, always nudging me to move forward, always inspiring me to reach out to others. For years I resisted the call, although deep within my heart I longed to live elsewhere, abroad, completely immersed in a different culture. The Lord's great patience and wisdom led me in mysterious ways. With time, it all became clearer, more comprehensible. However, I could not name the spirituality by which I lived.

A MISSION ORIENTED PARTNERSHIP

On a trip to Peru, some years ago, I discovered the hidden treasure—I met a community of missionary nuns whose spirituality had a name: THANKSGIVING... to give thanks at all times! As I listened to them talk about their spirituality I realized, at the same time, that throughout the years of my life, I too had been nourished by that specific spirit of THANKSGIVING. What I heard enchanted me and I wanted to delve more deeply into the source which had a Marian dimension. Mother Délia Tétreault, foundress of the MIC Institute, left this legacy to her spiritual family; we have been gratified by this gift. As I lis-

tened more intently, I knew without any doubt that one day I would go to a mission abroad with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. It was Hong Kong that received me; this is where I had the privilege of living the fabulous adventure. I still give thanks to God for having blessed me with such a beautiful gift. The children of Good Hope Primary School welcomed me wholeheartedly. Because I did not speak Cantonese, I was somewhat reluctant in approaching them; however, their charming personalities conquered my fear. With these little Chinese girls I discovered my talents in teaching and creative art. It was such joy for me to initiate them to the language of Shakespeare. I also had other opportunities such as: serving the Chinese and Filipina elderly in various care homes; translating some documents for the Hong Kong Anglican Church; teaching French as a second language at the Hong Kong *Alliance Française*. All along this mission experience I felt at home among the MIC family who demonstrated openness and a welcoming attitude. I was seduced by their joy, their friendliness and presence to all peoples from various backgrounds; to this day, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity of taking part in their mission. I am immensely proud to be a lay missionary associated to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

IMPACT ON MY CURRENT AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS

The spirituality of Thanksgiving has left an indelible mark in my heart. It has changed my life, my way of seeing things and it keeps me awakened to the movements of the Spirit. Mission is on-going and it inspires my heart to be opened, attentive and committed.

More than ever I live and pass-on this spirituality to the youth and adults who come to their religious education classes. I feel responsible in communicating this great spirituality of Thanksgiving to my



friends and family members, to all those who are in search of meaning in life. I dream of the day when the world will be a better place to live in.

Last summer, at the Lanaudière Amphitheater, I had the joy of attending The Creation Oratorio by Haydn; this magnificent and sublime text which praises God for the Beauty of Creation left me in awe. The vast lawn which can accommodate up to 10,000 people was packed. As I observed the crowd filling in all the space, I thought: *there is still hope!*



¹ Nicole with her students in Hong Kong

² Nicole in the Philippines
Photos Credit: MIC

On the Bank of the St. Lawrence River

The mighty Saint Lawrence River which takes its source from the Great Lakes and drains into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, is the largest estuary in the world. The course of this magnificent River is also the course of Canadian history. It is at the heart of many Quebec novels, poems and songs; it has been portrayed in paintings and its beauty is inspirational. Clémence relates how she has been touched by what she saw.



By *Clémence Lord*

I was born and raised on the highlands of l'Islet Regional County, Quebec. Fresh air, the wide open spaces and green forests were my paradise. With my classmates, at the end of a school year, we went on a field trip to St-Jean-Port-Joli. For the first time, I saw the ocean, that is to say: I thought it was the *ocean* because of the mightiness of the St. Lawrence River. Such was the beginning of a long love story with the silvery blue tidal waves of this Gulf-like inner sea.

SUMMER MEMORIES

Later in years, my in-laws offered me the opportunity of discovering the banks of a River that had so much to offer. On sunny Sundays, my sister-in-law, Dodo, her husband, Jean and their three children always welcomed the Pelletier clan to their summer cottage at l'Anse-Saint-Jean. It was picnic time: besides the variety of foods, stories and laughter which filled the air, heart-loving family ties became strong. When the children arrived they would run to the shore to build their favorite sand castles. Of course, there were the mischievous ones who would enjoy splashing mud all around—the mothers watching, would call them back to the cottage.

Sometimes, late afternoon, the wind and clouds would appear; fearing rain, we would move our stuff to a mini shelter behind the cottage. As we shared our meal, we reveled before the panoramic view. Then came time to stretch our legs: the men played petanque; my sister-in-law led the others for a discovery walk along the river bank and rocks. The beauty of the wild flowers growing strong in their wild habitats, the birds hovering over the shore, the fragrance of sea-salt and kelp all filling our senses reinvigorated us for the upcoming week.

A WHISPERING TIDE

In awe, we watched the bright sun gradually setting behind the horizon, seemingly touching the waters before disappearing behind the mountains of Charlevoix. We had replenished our energies for the week. Though we parted with regrets, we were most happy and content with our day. Dodo had shared with us her love for this peaceful haven. Since the time she was married, she with John and the children would spend their summers close by the whispering tide.

And to paraphrase a famous film, Dodo's joy was not in the meadow but on the bank of the St. Lawrence River. Even when it was hazy, she took pleasure in walking on its bank. She remembered the many hours spent swimming, the sounds of laughter of her children, the daring plunges into the waves without thinking of water temperatures, and the drift wood collected by the children during day time, that kept the camp fires lit at night.

Dodo's cherished haven was so full of beautiful memories that she wished to be there when her eyes would close for the last time. I like to think that when the moment came, her beloved Jean, a former seaman, appeared in front of their cottage, to silently bring her in his boat for the ultimate crossing. 🌊





A TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

With the teachers and students of the Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA), Manila, Philippines, the MIC Sisters pursue the social dream of Délia Tétréault. On February 23, 1923 she wrote to her Sisters: *I feel the urgency within me to tell you and repeat: We live solely for God's interests; let us bring to Our Lord all the cooperation that is possible...* This call prompts us to meet the daily challenges and actively collaborate in building a more just society.

By Wilma Maligaso, Social Worker

This dream is imbedded in all the facets of the MIC Sisters' educative processes. It awakens the youths' consciousness and the school community members to the existing local and global issues. Together, with the Catholic Church, we cooperate in finding solutions.

THE ENVIRONMENT —IN A CRITICAL STATE

A first step is to become acquainted with the problems. Human activities exploit the environment causing irreparable damage. Climate change and global warming, loss of biodiversity, energy crisis, nuclear issues, pollution in land, air, water, waste management, ozone depletion, rain forest destructions, all these problems create a domino effect resulting in a massive threat on all that God has created. In June 1999 the late Pope John Paul II reminded us of our ecological vocation: *If you love your native land, do not let this appeal go unanswered. Devise programs for the protection of the*

environment and ensure that they are properly put into effect. Social institutions, like schools, play an important role in sustaining the environment.

The Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA), a school of 7,000 students, heard the call of Mother Delia, of the Vatican Council, and of the Pope. The school has adopted the Transformative Education Approach which advocates the integration and understanding of the relationship between local and global concerns in the light of gender issues, social justice, peace and the environment. This holistic approach compels individuals to move into a collective and participatory action which leads to solidarity. It prepares the way for a simple way of life together with an appreciation and caring love of creation.

HOPING FOR A DYNAMIC RESPONSE

The fact that this Transformative Education Approach is integrated in the school policies and

in the students' curriculum, ICA expects it to bring some changes even among its community members. A deeper awareness of our environmental problems and a dynamic response in safeguarding our planet from destruction is what we are hoping for.

Educators, students and parents have found ways to involve the whole community in preserving the environment within the school vicinity as well as around the area. In 2002, we initiated the Solid Waste Management Program thus supporting the Philippines Government's Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. It took time to change the mentalities; habits of long ago were well embedded. However, the MIC Sisters, with students and teachers were adamant—awareness campaigns and interventions were continuous. Gradually, the Program was implemented; it gained wide acceptance and its importance has been recognized.

A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

In order to implement this Program, teachers have been most creative. Games, contests, film viewing, project work, video recording, role playing, research, journal writing, model making, demonstrations, experimenting, field trips and other teaching methodologies, were all part and parcel in promoting environmental education. Then the concrete practical steps were introduced: All trash cans have been placed outside the classrooms—students have stopped littering. In the school, a monitoring system has been set up so that proper segregation of waste disposal is guaranteed. With this method, we have observed that there is a considerable decrease in the volume of residual wastes. Recyclable materials are sold and income from this is used to contribute to the school's Scholarship Fund and even finance the students' outreach activities.

The MIC Sisters, office personnel, administrators and teachers have also modified their habits in order to conserve energy, water and use of supplies. The school has succeeded in creating a sense of collective responsibility as faithful stewards of God's creation and in emphasizing our role in preserving the natural environment. Like their teachers and office personnel, the students have learned to use both sides of their papers; they also collect scratch papers and turn them into scrap pads. The school community members have become accustomed to bringing their food containers and their utensils when buying food at the canteen—disposable containers and utensils have been minimized. Air condition units are also used with restraint—when temperatures drop a bit, windows are opened and air conditioners are shut.



A CONTAGIOUS ACTIVITY

The Immaculate Conception Academy works in partnership with other social institutions as well. Through its Community Service and Development Office, recycling is promoted in the urban poor community called Tuberias; a place which lies on a stretch of a dead major water pipeline. This activity allows the students and the local population to realize that all recyclable materials, considered as waste, can be turned into new products thereby minimizing the need to use natural resources. Recently, ICA has begun collaborating with the Haribon Foundation, an environmental organization in the country. The school has been involved in the reforestation initiative in partnership with the Environmental Studies Institute of Miriam College, a Catholic school. Teachers have also done tree planting in the countryside in cooperation with the Handmaids of the Lord, a group of the Couples for Christ organization.

On a large scale perspective, our collective efforts might seem relatively small. However, they do have a positive impact not only on the environment but also on the way we live our lives and how we relate with each other and with God's creation. It helps us to change our old habits and ways of doing—from being materialistic and greedy to being simple and giving, from being wasteful to being frugal and considerate in using our resources, from being proud and judgmental to being humble and just.

We are becoming good caretakers of God's creation and perhaps Mother Délia could tell us that *God's Holy Will consists in treating the natural resources appropriately and conscientiously for the benefit of all mankind.* ☺

¹ Learning to respect nature

² Planting trees

Photos Credit: ICA



A PRISM OF HOPE

At a young age were our eyes not fascinated upon discovering the mini rainbow colors through a prism? It was an impressive harmony of colors that left us in awe. We experience the same fascination for the range of religions in the world seeking the true God. Each projects its own particular colors.

By *Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.*

Socrates, Jesus, Buddha, three sages who though in the world were able to be detached from it so as to remain awakened, attentive and conscious.¹ Searching the truth leads to an authentic freedom: freedom of the individual to choose in face of tradition, authority and societies' dominant opinions; but above all, to obtain inner freedom which comes from true self-knowledge and masterfulness. The above three great masters of life do not propose automatic happiness but an eventual realization of self. We have much to learn from them before reaching an authentic dialogue with others.

In its dialogue with other religions and Asian philosophies, what can the Church learn?

1. From the Muslims, the Church can learn to pray, fast and give alms.

2. From the Hindus, the Church can learn to meditate and contemplate.

3. From the Buddhists, the Church can learn to be detached from material goods and attain respect for all living things.

4. From Confucianism, the Church can learn filial devotion and respect for the elders.

5. From Taoism, the Church can learn simplicity and humility.

6. From Animists, the Church can learn profound respect for nature and gratitude for the harvest.

It seems clear that for the Church in Asia, the mission route today is dialogue and collaboration between the religions and philosophies. The Churches can see themselves as co-pilgrims on the road towards the Kingdom of God.

Two questions are therefore asked: Do members of these religions accept and welcome collaborating? What do they wish to receive from the Catholic religion?

WHAT CAN THEY LEARN FROM US, CATHOLICS?

This is the question I ask you today. It is up to you to reflect upon it personally or with a group. We would be happy and appreciate receiving the outcome of your reflections.

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Your answers will be a prism of hope, orienting us on the road of true dialogue and enriching each one of us.

¹ GADBOIS, André, *The God of Long Journeys*, MIC Mission News, Oct.-Dec. 2010

FURTHER READING:

LENOIR, Frederic,

Jesus, Socrates, Buddha

– Susanna Lea Associates, Versilio, 2009

VIA THE INTERNET:

AMALADOSS, Michael, S.J.,
INSECT – Together Towards the Kingdom



TO DIG WELLS OF HOPE

To walk the WAY OF LIFE is to dig a well. At times, you can be weary, lonely, cold, without hope, feeling abandoned. However, you must not let yourself be discouraged, but walk-on, continue to dig and trust God. He is there, in your heart, in your life, He never forsakes you. If He asks you to plant a tree or dig a well, even though there are no signs of water on the spot, even though you do not know how deep you will need to dig, nor the amount of energy that will be demanded of you or the problems you might encounter to reach the bottom—keep on trusting! He knows and He will give you the means to reach it. And the first one to benefit from it will be you. Saint Paul says: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith* (2Tim 4:7). Is this not the foundation of hope?

A FUTURE IN THE MAKING

In the Gospel of Mark 6:34-44, it is said that when Jesus stepped out of the boat, he saw a large crowd of people... He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began teaching them. What was the content of His instructions since the crowd forgot to eat and drink? As we read through the Gospels we discover that somewhat like the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, all thirsts can be quenched and all hungers can be filled when we are in contact with Jesus and His Word.

By Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

In those days, it was Jesus... it was the crowd of that particular time... Nowadays, with the crowd of our time, what is happening? Is there a well... where we can stop? Is there a well... where someone is awaiting us?

TRANSMITTING THE FAITH TODAY

Yes, there is a well and someone is there awaiting us. Have you ever heard of the word: CATECHESIS? *This is a process that addresses the young people's actual experiences; by various activities they discover that faith in God and a relationship with Jesus will have a positive influence in their lives and may enable them to view the world with a different perspective.¹*

For the past six years, I have had the opportunity of living this experience at a parish in Montreal. One Sunday, the pastor was searching for volunteers who could give some of their time to transmit the faith to young people who were waiting for catechists. I decided to respond to the call, a call to evangelize and continue Jesus' Mission. When Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte launched the new school year on September nineteen, he stated that *to speak of Jesus in words understood by the generation of our time, to be Jesus' messengers and witnesses, the dynamism of His mission must be experienced and lived... Every day we are building the Church of today and of tomorrow.*

IT'S A LIFELONG JOURNEY

All age groups are involved in this Diocesan project. A manual entitled: *Proposing Jesus Christ Today as the way to freedom and responsibility*, is given to each catechist. Herein we find a dynamic way of presenting Jesus to those who wish to journey with Him.

Teenage girls and boys attend my class; their desire is to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Every Sunday morning, these youths come to meet Jesus; they wish to become better acquainted with Him, to hear His Message, and to verify the impact Jesus has in their personal life.

After their Confirmation, I offer the youth the possibility of continuing their journey with Jesus, once a month in the afternoon. For someone who wishes to live a lifelong journey with Jesus, it is important to establish links with history. It is interesting to know about the heroes and the witnesses who banked their lives on Jesus, on His Word, and who committed themselves to continue His Mission. Do we not find it deplorable that in the education of our youth today there is an absence of HISTORY? How to construct the future without a link to the past that has fashioned us?

THE FAITH IN OUR HISTORY

In fidelity to our past, I invited the youth to come and learn about the his-



tory of our Christian faith. The question put forward was: How come we are Christian Catholics? The great adventure began with the European missionaries who came to New France and gradually introduced the faith. First, it was in Quebec City, then in Ville-Marie (present-day Montreal). Jerome LeRoyer de La Dauversiere was the visionary and driving force behind a successful venture which he entrusted to two great leaders: Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance. After presenting to the students the key people who played an important role in the foundation of Montreal, they are then asked to discover their own specific talents, their strengths... and how they intend to use these in the choice of their academic courses and later in choosing a career. The next step is to take a guided tour to Maison St-Gabriel at Pointe-St-Charles, then to the museum of the Religious Hospitallers of St-Joseph and the Montreal Hotel-Dieu Hospital. This tour enables the students to 'see' what history tells us. A link is also established between the now and then: social, education and missionary-wise.

The second year offers as starting point the Eucharistic Congress which took place in Quebec in 2008. This historical event presents us the New Covenant; the students deepen their awareness of God's Love for each one, a Love that is given us in Jesus, the Bread of Life, and who remains with us in the Tabernacle, the new Arc of the Covenant. This is a year when students experience God's Love in a different way. It is the tiny seed sown in their hearts... is it a future in the making? Yes!

AN ACTIVE FAITH

What do the students learn during the third year of their faith journey? Having learnt that missionaries were very present in New France, it is clear that the Church was also present. This Church... I am a member ever since my Baptism. I have a role in it and also a call to serve in whatever way possible. Therefore, on a Sunday morning, we go to l'Accueil Bonneau; with respect, we serve dinners to the itin-



erants and learn that all individuals are to be treated with dignity.

On another occasion, we visit the Recluse Sisters. We are welcomed by Sr. Louise Lemieux; she explains the importance and impact the contemplative life has on the missionary activity of the Church. She also speaks about their spiritual link with Jeanne Leber whom the students have already heard about in their previous courses.

WILL THIS FAITH JOURNEY PRODUCE ANY FRUITS?

For the young people who are preparing for their first year CEGEP: Catherine, Tamara and Marie-Sophie, or for those beginning their second year: Etienne, Maclee and Caroline, the group sharing sessions and the learning process are inspiring and rewarding opportunities. The beautiful moments we share together leave an impact. I trust that the seed sown in their hearts will take root and flourish. Gradually they will be the Christians God is calling them to be. 

¹ Assembly of Bishops, "Jesus Christ, the Way to Humanization" (JCWH) 2004

PHOTOS

¹ Sr. Léonie with young adults during a catechetical session

² Giving a helping hand at l'Accueil Bonneau
Photos Credit: MIC



*We must dig wells
to quench tomorrow*



*today
ow's thirsts.*

*Peul Proverb**

* An ethnic nomadic group of people spread over many countries, predominantly in West Africa but also in Central and North Africa.

Aspects of the Rising New Communities

We have a somewhat rigid image of the first Christians. We often think that the primitive Christian community was composed of people from the same culture assembled around the twelve apostles in Jerusalem. However, as the Church grew in number and believers were being hassled and rejected, they had to go beyond their frontiers to establish new communities. There was no unique model!



Renaude Grégoire

About the author:

Renaude Grégoire is committed to Social Justice Issues and to an International Solidarity Organization; she is also a facilitator at Radio Ville-Marie.

The community in Antioch had a specificity which is hardly noticeable as we read the Acts of the Apostles. The most popular personality is that of Saul also called Paul the apostle. But this missionary community is also intercultural.

As he went on his mission, Paul tried to find those who were seeking God; he wished to impart the Good News to them. That is why a group of women had come together outside the city of Philippi. *One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshipper of God* (Acts 16:14). Lydia responded to Paul's message. She and the members of her household were baptized and the group formed a domestic Church.

Today, faith communities—religious, monastic and parochial are declining in various parts of the world. However, new shoots are appearing, faith-filled people are coming together in other various ways. They are wells of hope!

In the world of missionaries, some Institutes have opened their doors to the laity; together they share the same spirituality and mission, their commitment is officially acknowledged. Among some of these are the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* and the *Society of Foreign Missions*.

Upon their return home, these missionaries who have been abroad offer wells of hope to men and women who are searching for social trends linked to the Gospel values.

In 2003, a former missionary from Brazil who now lives close by the Trois-Rivières CEGEP and University opened the door of her home to young people who were searching for meaning in their lives. There is no formal program but a simple dialogue is established between persons who willingly come once a month. Questions are brought forward; doubts, uncertainties, joys as well as distress, are expressed openly without fear. The seekers put their trust in the Word of God; they are enlightened by its power. After being renewed they go out in their respective milieu to be "LIGHT" where needed. Gradually, **l'Eau Berge** (as it is now called) has become an intergenerational community where the Eucharist is offered monthly at the end of each gathering. Quoting Sister Mariette Milot, S.A.S.V.—*People are thirsty! Here, we come together and dig wells that quench our thirsts; many find new ways of changing what needs to be changed.*

In 2009, the basic communities called **Justice Solidarity** in Quebec celebrated their twenty years of existence. The members do not live together under the same roof, but they have their own homes and they come together once or twice a month. Their goal is to help all those who live under the poverty line and to understand the social issues that concern them. The members are people who live in poor conditions; they welcome all who are of good will. Their meetings unfold harmoniously in four steps: look at reality, reflect, listen to the Word of God, and

decide which action needs to be taken. We could qualify this group as a networking community.

Inspired by the Fraternity of the Suffering Servant in Brazil, the **Brotherhood of Spike** located in the neighborhood of Saint-Roch, Quebec helps the people living on the fringe to take charge; they relieve them from their solitude by including them in a small fraternity, a place where belonging gradually takes root. To highlight their twenty years of link with those persons who live in poverty or brokenness of some kind, Laurette Lepage, a laity, wrote a book entitled: *Standing With the Poor*. Their spirituality is taken from *The Suffering Servant* in the Book of Isaiah (ch. 53).

Other new communities place their focus on fraternal community life and they respond to the needs of the Church. In 1982, **Family Marie-Jeunesse** was established as a spiritual family, gathered around a Marian and Eucharistic spirituality. Young people, consecrated members, priests and families choose the Gospel as the ideal of holiness. Their mission is the evangelization of young people by young people, welcoming each one's uniqueness. They have hostels for the youth who wish to share their faith with other young people, and also have a desire to experience community life. Family Marie-Jeunesse is currently present in Quebec, the Reunion Island, Belgium and Tahiti. During the 2008 International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City, twelve young men from Family Marie-Jeunesse were ordained into the priesthood. A well of new hope for the Church!

There is another group called the **Family of Skylights**. It was born in 2000 as a result of numerous requests from parents concerned about their faith and wanting to pass it on to their children. Their Three "F" logo stands for FAMILY, FAITH, FEAST. All families are welcome: those on whom life smiles, those experiencing difficulties, traditional families, single parents, common law or reconstructed families, all those seeking human support in quest of God. Under the leadership of Father René Larochelle, from the Diocese of Quebec, families discover a spiritual-



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ity which is that of the Holy Family. It is a spirituality that fosters human relationships, the value of authentic love, unity, and forgiveness—indispensable elements to grow happily together as a couple. Families and individuals who come to the Family of Skylights commit themselves, in whatever capacity, to build a better world where fraternal love can be found and they respond to the needs of the Church.

These new community models seem quite different. In our broken world, they welcome all, they journey with all those who want to share and grow; they focus on the transformation of self, the world and fraternity. I am somewhat stunned by the term: *family*. There is a sincere search of places where, with others, we offer wells of hope to today's searching population. ∞

¹ Taizé Prayer

² Sr. Mariette Milot (right)

Photos Credit: R. Grégoire

The Risen Christ



Recently, we celebrated Easter, the Feast of the Risen Christ. What meaning does this event have for us in our lives? Why is it so important for our faith?

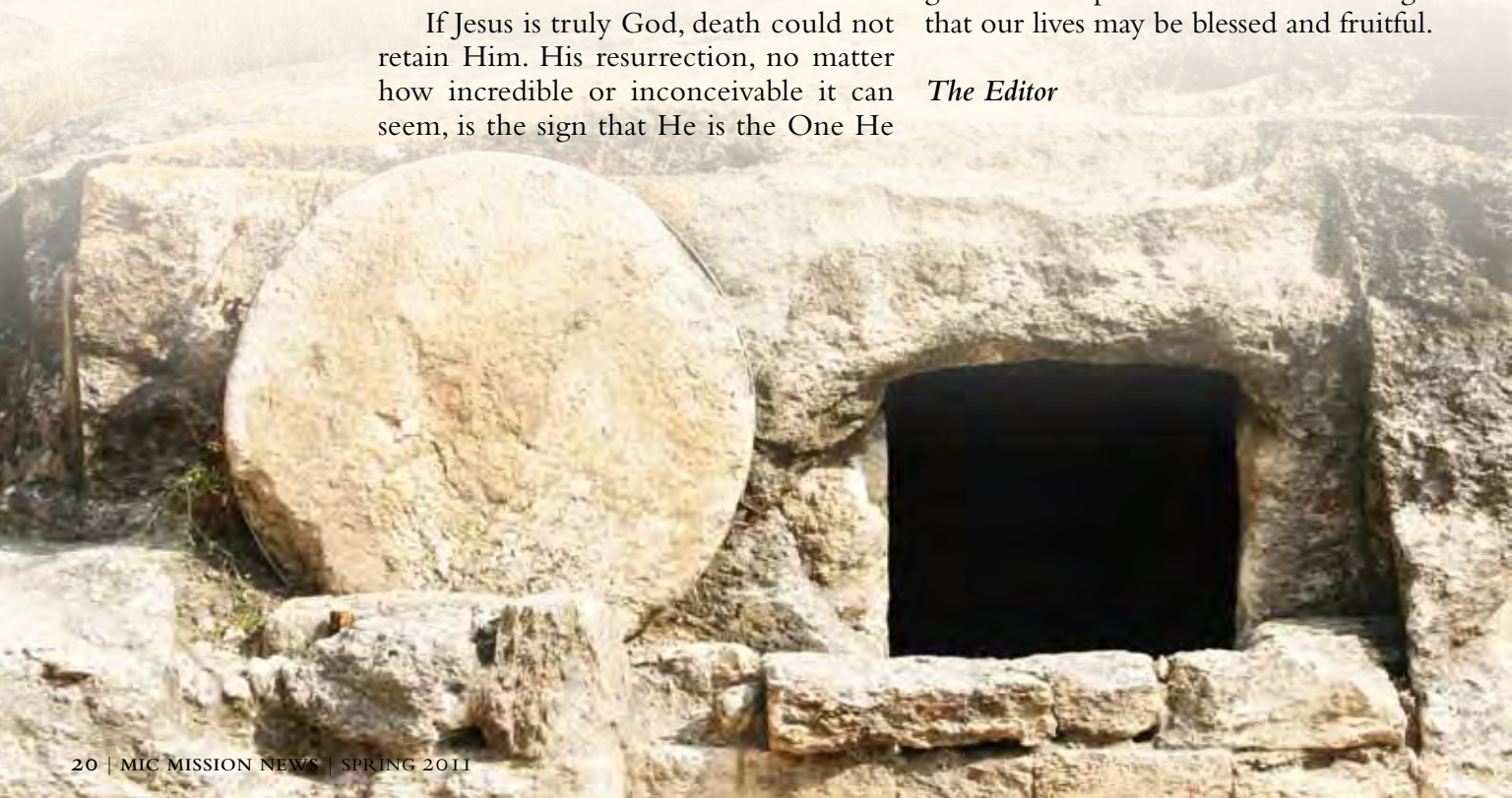
The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the foundation of our Christian faith. More than 500 witnesses saw the One who was crucified alive. His tomb was empty—God’s triumph over death. Even today, millions of Christians experience daily a deep and personal relationship with Jesus who is alive. The Apostle Paul wrote: *If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile* (1 Co 15:17). True, contrary to all other founders of religions, Jesus Christ said He was God: *I and the Father are one* (Jn 10:30). In other words: God took on flesh, He incarnated Himself on earth.

If Jesus is truly God, death could not retain Him. His resurrection, no matter how incredible or inconceivable it can seem, is the sign that He is the One He

said He was. Not only does Jesus want us to believe that He exists but He wants to be part of our lives. Indeed, this was Christ’s essential mission—that we may know Him personally as stated in John 17:3 *...that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*

Jesus, always alive, is present in each person’s life. *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full* (Jn 10:10). This reality changes our ways of being and of thinking. We are assured that after death there is life, Jesus’ resurrection and ascension are proofs of that. To welcome Him in our daily life signifies and evokes His real and invisible presence and assures us of our own resurrection. Jesus invites us to welcome Him and to receive the gift of His Spirit of Love and Strength that our lives may be blessed and fruitful.

The Editor





MISSION in Joliette

By *Marthe Valois, SS.CC.J.M.*

On November 7, 2010, the steeple bells of Joliette's Cathedral were heard from afar. Their chimes were joyful and noteworthy. During the Eucharistic celebration, six recipients were to receive from Msgr. Gilles Lussier, Bishop of the Diocese, the Medal of Merit; the MIC Sisters were among the group. This annual celebration highlights the commitment of parishioners who have significantly contributed to the life and spirit of the Diocese. For what reasons were the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception singled out? Sister Marthe expressed it the following way:



Sr. Monique Larouche, M.I.C., Sup.; Sr. Louise Denis, M.I.C., Gen. Sup.; Msgr. Gilles Lussier; Sr. M.-Thérèse Beaudette, M.I.C., Prov. Sup. — Photo Credit: MIC

In the year 1909, the Sisters arrived in Joliette and lived on Manseau Street; in 1930 they moved to St-Louis Street. These religious women who wore a blue and white habit did not go unnoticed. Their missionary spirit and their openness in heart and mind conquered the Joliette population as well as the Diocese. Through the Holy Childhood Association, the Propagation of the Faith, and their retreat house which was open to women of all ages, they developed and instilled the missionary spirit. Within 50 years, 65,000 persons participated to 2,320 retreats organized by the MIC Sisters.

Space was also available for group meetings, spiritual conferences and health-care presentations. Up to this day, they frequently open their house to various organizations and community groups such as l'Arche, Faith and Light, the Sacred

Heart Family. The annual bazaar which takes place on their premises is organized by numerous associates for the benefit of the missions. These lay associates share the MIC Sisters' spirituality and they commit themselves to mission projects.

Each year, the Diocese welcomes the MIC Sisters. They visit the schools and families; they share their mission experiences and offer solace to those who are in need. Others commit themselves to the Diocese by offering their services: they take responsibility of the liturgical music; they actively promote the spirit of mission in numerous parishes and they present the homilies at Sunday Masses particularly on World Mission Sunday. They also offer courses to the immigrants and help them inculturate in their new milieu (Fr. Wilson Ramirez Angel was one of the beneficiaries). Adults in need of spiritual and psycho-

logical help can receive guidance from the Sisters. Visiting the sick, assisting those who are ailing are all services rendered by the MICs.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have always been attentive to the needs of the people and are close to the less fortunate. Currently, the main purpose of their house in Joliette is to welcome those missionaries, who after years of devotedness abroad, come back to their native land. They remain active in spite of their limited physical capacities; discreetly they radiate compassion and their presence in our midst is precious. In gratitude for your missionary involvement in the Diocese, you are invited to come forward and to receive from Msgr. Gilles Lussier the Diocesan Medal of Merit 🌸

Missionaries of the Poor

Have you ever been touched upon seeing a poor or an itinerant homeless person? Somewhat like St. Vincent de Paul or Mother Teresa, the Brothers Missionaries of the Poor took over from the MIC Sisters the 'Asile Communal' in Cap-Haitien, Haiti. At the request of Sr. Madeleine Alarie, M.I.C., they willingly came to the rescue of the poor and homeless.



Marie-Paule Sanfaçon,
M.I.C.

Paul-Eugene Magloire was elected president of Haiti in 1950. He gave some attention to the poorer class of his country. In some regions he constructed canteens and established some social services among which there was the 'Asile Communal' (Communal Home) in Cap-Haitien. He asked the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to organize and direct the Home which was established to rescue the elderly, the abandoned women and men who were without shelters. Many MIC Sisters gave their lifetime commitment in providing physical and spiritual care to these patients.

A LOVE THAT KNOWS NO LIMIT

Personally, I have seen three MIC Sisters in action: Sr. Rachel Blanchette, Sr. Marie-Lucienne Déry, and Sr. Madeleine Alarie. They respectively gave 50 – 20 – 10 years at the 'Asile Communal'. Each one left an indelible mark on the hearts of the elderly and the personnel. I remember seeing Sr. Rachel who day after day would go to the market-place to buy the food needed at the Home. She often had to beg for the 250 elderly—government subsidies did not cover all the expenses. Her greatest resource came from her vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

She directed the staff members with gracious attentiveness: they worked in the laundry room, the kitchen, gardens, and helped with various cleaning chores. Sister was most vigilant and checked the patients' conditions daily. They called her: Mama Marie, a tender way of naming her, instead of Sr. Marie-Rachel. In this

little paradise you could feel the peaceful atmosphere and inner joy that existed; how often we would see a blind person leading another blind with buckets in hand, walking together to the well to fetch their water. Sister Marie-Rachel always took time to listen to each one's stories and with affection would organize little parties and prayerful gatherings that would bring comfort to those simple, loving hearts.

At the dispensary, Sr. Marie-Lucienne welcomed the patients; she tended to the physical ailments and moral sufferings. Every morning, the long line of patients waited for her and with a smile she gently treated each one no matter the many hours it took. When an elderly was nearing the end, there was always a comforting prayerful presence close by. He who had received the minimum during his lifetime would depart from this world with a smile. As I stood by the bedside of the one dying, I could see his hand and feet deformed as a result of a harsh life and I would say to myself: Did he ever experience human joy? But now on his deathbed, the ultimate moment of his life, God gave him the joy of embracing the truth: *he is the beloved child of God.*

AN IMPERATIVE MUST

After so many years of dedication, Sr. Marie-Rachel and Sr. Marie-Lucienne left the communal home and Sr. Madeleine Alarie took over. Renovations and steps towards modernizing the place was a must. Sr. Madeleine continued reaching-out to the patients while working and supervising the repairs. Her concern was to provide a



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bit more comfort to the patients and also welcome at 'l'Asile Communal' the many handicapped children she met on the streets. Notwithstanding the numerous political upheavals, Sr. Madeleine's competence and entrepreneurial flair would always overcome the problems... until the day her health gave way. She soon realized that this precious mission work would have to be passed on to someone else. She called upon religious communities for help—the Missionaries of the Poor responded. This mission corresponded perfectly well with their charism.

The Brothers of the Poor as they were first called were founded in 1981 by Father Richard Ho Lung whose parents had migrated from Macao to Jamaica. He came from a modest family and experienced poverty. After years of studies, Fr. Lung began reaching out to the very poor in slums, in ghettos; others followed him and from the very beginning the group was comprised of twelve brothers all serving the neediest people, the most abandoned ones. In a short span of time they spread out to Haiti, India and the Philippines. Today, they are 550 Brothers at the service of the poor and they live on charity, for there is no other income. Are they not heroes of the twenty-first century? Imagine: 550 Brothers feeding daily over 20,000 poor; is this not miraculous? They opt to live a simple ordinary life and they accomplish extraordinary things. Their vocation is to follow Christ in His ministry. Father Ho Lung finds his joy in bearing his cross every day and in his expanding community. During the International Year

of the Priests in 2009, a book was published entitled: *Heroic Priests*. Among the twelve priests mentioned for their courageous determination in meeting challenges, Father Ho Lung was one of them.

A MISSION TO KEEP UP

Sensitive to the support given to the elderly at 'l'Asile Communal' the Brothers immediately became involved in its operation. With the help of Sr. Madeleine they completed a number of renovation projects: repainted the building, fixed the roof which had leaks, installed additional bathrooms and toilets, renovated the kitchen and dining area. Behind the Home, the Myriam Dispensary was built to look after the medical needs of the neighbouring population. A chapel was set up for daily Eucharistic celebrations.

The gardens have expanded—they provide the vegetables and fruits as well as the wood for cooking. The Brothers give much love to the elderly and the handicapped children; they realize that each person has a sacred history. Of the fifty some children in the Home, some are sent to schools run by other religious orders; the Brothers wish to give these youngsters a solid educational foundation that could help them later on in life. A wish that is dear to all: build a better world where love and unity will radiate.

These heroes of the twenty-first century, are they not the salt of the earth which brings forth love, joy and serenity to those who have been neglected in life and lived through nightmares? ~

¹ Sr. Rachel Blanchette, M.I.C.;
a patient from l'Asile;
Sr. Lucienne Déry, M.I.C.

² Sr. Madeleine Alarie, M.I.C.

³ Missionaries of the Poor
in service

Photos Credit: MIC

Spreading Our Wings to



By *Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C.*

Without doubt, one of Délia Tétreault's dreams was to spread throughout the world the Good News of God's love for all and to remind all Christians of their missionary responsibilities. By virtue of our Baptism, we are all called to be missionaries, i.e. sharers of God's love through words and good actions. This year, a team of promoters from the MIC Missionary Press has undertaken the challenge of combining the ministry of mission awareness with the promotion of our *MIC Mission News Magazine*. The fact that the English parishes in Quebec have diminished through the years, the call to spread our wings to further horizons has finally come. Where to go? Western Canada is our destination.

CALGARY, A PULSATING PLACE TO DISCOVER

Last year, Sr. Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C., from Hong Kong and myself, Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C., originally from the Philippines teamed up for an unprecedented adventure. What had been our previous responsibilities? Sr. Mary Olga has had thirty-eight years of experience in the field of education in Hong Kong while I have worked twenty some years for the ministry of Justice and Peace in Taiwan. Now, we are together as a team and we have chosen Calgary, Alberta to launch

our new project. Why Calgary? A former student of our Good Hope School in Hong Kong had eagerly invited us to come visit her Church. Another reason, the Bishop of the Diocese, Msgr. Frederick Henry, also welcomed us warmly upon our request to come visit his Diocese; we do thank him wholeheartedly for his openness. Thirdly, we considered Calgary to be a young, dynamic city whose population is multi-ethnic; a promising community of mission minded citizens.

A STEP IN FAITH

Even at the outset, we felt that this mission project was in God's plan. Though we had no idea what the outcome would be, we did not hesitate to venture out into the unknown. Early March 2010, we had only one parish, St. Luke, on our agenda. Uncertain of how other parishes would respond to our coming and where we would lodge did not deter us from going ahead. We simply trusted in Divine Providence as did Mother Délia throughout her lifetime and founding years of our Institute. In faith we knew that all would go well and indeed we were not disappointed as He led us and His bountifulness provided for all our needs.

Mrs. Jenny Lai Shuk Chung, former student of Good Hope School was

Further Horizons



Calgary

instrumental in our audacious decision to visit Calgary; throughout our six months stay, she acted as our guardian angel. Our meetings with the Bishop, Msgr. Frederick Henry, allowed us to become aware of his missionary spirit. As he shared with us his vision for the Diocese, we discovered the love he has for his people and his hope that all will grow in faith and love of God. He conquered our admiration.

OPEN TO THE MISSION

Among the thirty parishes of that particular Diocese, we chose to visit twenty-one. All were welcoming, accommodating and open to the mission world. They were English speaking communities except two, one of which was Cantonese/Mandarin speaking and the other was French. Upon invitation, we were delighted to give mission awareness presentations in some schools and to some Church groups. We noticed that there was interest and enthusiasm among the children as we talked about vocations and missions; even some teachers attended the question and answer session.

A FERVENT DIOCESE

It is with much joy that we met the Calgarians and some people from Vancouver. On different occasions we also

met Church group leaders; we were impressed by their prayerfulness, loyalty and dedication to the services of the Church. Their zeal for the ministries and the Kingdom of God inspired us, encouraged us and supported us in our ministry. We also learned that working people as well as retired or semi-retired people take time for prayer and fasting. Isn't that something special in today's world? Dear friends from Calgary and Vancouver, you are worthy of mention and praise. You remind us of our Foundress, Mother Délia Tétreault who had such "zeal for souls" that her prayers and actions were relentless. Thank you for being there!

A special "Thank You" to all those who have accepted to become our collaborators: Jenny and Ivan Lai, Monica Chan, Goretti Huang, Joenie Watemar and her friends Grace and Janice, Judy Tseng and her son Bosco, Tita Atienza and all the leaders of the Charismatic and Prayer Groups, Fior & Ernie Alama, Nirmla & Joseph Gingco. May the Lord of the Mission continue to Bless you and the whole Diocese of Calgary; may His abundant Love, overflowing Joy and everlasting Peace abide within you always. ☪

¹ Sr. Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C.;
Msgr. Frederick Henry;
Sr. Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C.
²⁻³⁻⁴⁻⁵⁻⁶ Mission Awareness
in assembly halls,
classrooms, churches
Photos Credit: MIC

Letters from here and abroad



Sr. Ana with Sr. Chieko Uchimura, M.I.C.

SAITAMA, JAPAN – OPEN HOUSE – *An International Catholic Center for Immigrants*

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you invited me in. (Mt 25:35-36)

These gospel words have a special resonance in the heart of those who work at the Open House Center in Oyama City, Diocese of Urawa. Established in 1994, it continues to respond to the numerous needs of the immigrants in Japan. The beneficiaries are on the rise as well as the many volunteers who are touched by the new arrivals. Many people support the activities of the Center.

The goals of Open House are:

- Respond to the various needs of the immigrants—lodging, food, legal and medical help, moral and psychological support, spiritual guidance.
- Create means that provide community gatherings for the immigrants; having left behind their loved ones they often suffer from solitude and loneliness.
- Develop a mutual understanding between the Japanese community and the new immigrants.

Through these welfare services, the Center reassures the new-comers and is a way to welcome them to the Japanese culture. Our humanitarian efforts give hands and feet to the Gospel message and above all our listening hearts pacify the apprehensions.

*Ana Alvarado, M.I.C.
Peruvian, missionary in Japan*

MBOUO, BANDJOUN, CAMEROON

Hardly six months after her arrival, Sr. Yolaine is becoming more inculturated in her new country; she continues discovering the Cameroonians' traditional customs which are very different from ours. She shares with us what she has learned.

Today, the Church was full of people. They came in droves to celebrate the wedding of five couples. The ceremony lasted four hours because some received the sacrament of Baptism before their marriage. Weddings unfold as follows: After the man and the woman have consented to take each other as husband and wife, they go before the altar and the groom solemnly says that the ring he is about to give her is a symbol of their union and fidelity; she then raises her hand high for everyone to see and the spouse slips the ring onto her finger. Everyone witnesses the gesture and applauds. At the end a final blessing is given: May the Lord bless this couple—may He keep them united and faithful at all times, for better or for worse.

Would you like to know how we say that a child has a fever? Madeleine, the parish cook, came to see me with her one year old son and said: *My son is burning this morning. He is sick and I must go to the hospital with him.* Luckily she told me he was sick; I figured he had a temperature. I also learned that if you want a plastic bag you ask for a shell. This can be somewhat confusing, but when we know, we bring the 'shell' without hesitation.

Today, I learned that the Roncalli Foundation of Canada accepts to finance a project for the schools in our parish: THREE WELLS! Our students will be able to drink fresh water. It is with joy that I will supervise the work; these wells will be most beneficial for the children and we are most grateful.

Yolaine Lavoie, m.i.c.



YOU ARE MY WITNESSES



Sr. Gloria Pérez, M.I.C. (2nd right)

Holguin, Cuba

Having an extensive experience in the initial formation of youth to the religious life in Cuba and having served as a member of the MIC Provincial Council, Sr. Gloria is now in Cochabamba, Bolivia. She is currently a member of the formation team at the MIC Novitiate.



Sr. Denise Baudouin, M.I.C.

Corbeck, Les Cayes, Haiti

To know the culture of a country is an asset. Sr. Denise has been a missionary in Peru for many years; she also is currently serving on the formation team at the MIC Novitiate in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Charity—Soul of the Mission

MISSION—if not guided by charity, if not inspired by God's deep Love, it risks being reduced to a simple philanthropic and social activity. The Love which God has for each person is the heart of the Good News. Those who are touched by the experience of this Love and receive its proclamation become witnesses of the Gospel.

Jesus gave His Apostles the mandate to proclaim this Love. After His Resurrection, the Apostles having been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, began witnessing and proclaiming the death and resurrection of Jesus. Since then, the Church has continued this mission and it is for all Christians a permanent commitment which cannot be ignored.

Further reading: World Mission Sunday, October 24, 2010 – homily of Pope Benedict XVI



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Thank you
for your generosity!

Dawn of a New Life

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



Cécile Martel, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint Elzéar)
1914-2010
Joliette, QC

Cécile was third in a family of nine children; with her siblings she lived a simple life. A contemporary of Mother Délia Tétreault, Sr. Cécile served in Quebec for a period of ten years after which she received her mandate for Tsung Ming, China. In the advent of the Communist regime, Sr. Cécile was transferred to Manila, Philippines and also helped the 'squatters' of Sapang Palay. After 25 years of mission AD EXTRA, she came back to her Canadian homeland. For years Sister crisscrossed the Province of Quebec promoting our mission magazine. Then came the computer age...she excelled in mastering various programs. Young at heart, Sr. Cécile lived an active life with a grateful heart until the end.



Jeanne d'Arc Champagne, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marthe-du-Sauveur)
1910-2010
Saint-Prosper (Dorchester), QC

One hundred years of age! She was the last born in a family of twelve children. At a young age, Jeanne d'Arc learned to pray and to give pennies to the poor. When the Missionary Sisters would visit her school she would imagine herself in China, working among the abandoned youth. After graduating from a teacher training school, she entered religious life. She served 30 years in Quebec before being assigned to Africa. She courageously studied two local languages: Tumbuka and Nyanja. Sister reached out to the poor children and taught them the basics. Upon her return to Canada in 1976, she dedicated herself to the elderly and the sick. Her unassuming presence revealed the One with whom she journeyed.



Evelyn O'Neill, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte-Alexandrine)
1918-2010
Quebec City, QC

Evelyn was fourth in a family of twelve children and she thanked God for her devoted and faithful parents. *The Lord looks upon you with love* is a statement that pursued her constantly; the irresistible call to religious life kept haunting her. At the age of twenty-two, she responded and entered the MIC Institute. Her mission country was Zambia—there, she endorsed many tasks: established a Domestic Training Centre for women; organized Leadership Training Sessions in parishes and prayer centers in various parts of the diocese; founded a Communications Center that operated in both Nyanja and English. Upon her return to Canada Sr. Evelyn worked at PROMIS with the immigrants. A woman of deep faith, she kept her missionary dynamism until the end.



Geneviève Paquin, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Albéric)
1918-2010
Saint-Ubalde, QC

Geneviève loved to teach her brothers and sisters; she taught ten years in her parish school. She entered religious life at Pont-Viau at the age of twenty-nine. As a young professed Sister she taught in our schools at Granby and Three Rivers, QC. In 1952, she left for Port-Salut, Haiti. Her sound judgment and gentleness were appreciated by all who knew her as Superior and Directress of the school. In time, she was also appointed at Limbé, Les Côteaux, and Hinche. After twenty-three years in Haiti, she came back to Canada and devoted her energies to community services. Her pleasant smile, gentle words, characterized her well; with great simplicity she reached out to those in need.

Life in Religious Communities

The Age of Fervor, 1840-1960

CLAUDE GRAVEL

POSTFACE BY LUC NOPPEN



Did you know that Nuns are the ones who built the hospitals which Quebec inherited in 1960?



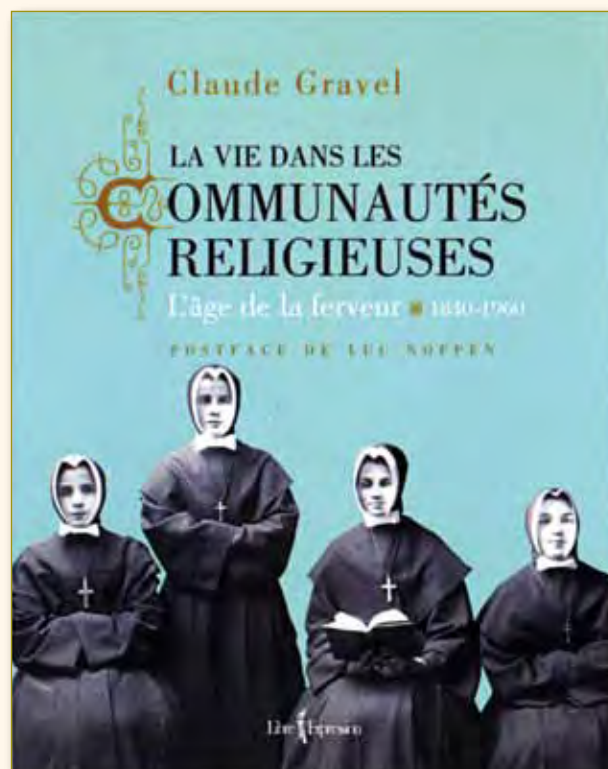
Did you know that the Brothers who came from France were the first to teach the sons of labourers?



Did you know that men and women religious treated thousands of victims during epidemic times?



Did you know that one hundred years ago, French Canadian missionaries were present in dozens of countries?



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OF GODS AND MEN

Though consecrated to God, the monks remain men. Like all human beings they live with their human fears, their heroic deeds, their coherence, their inconsistencies, their pride, and their errors.

The film of Xavier Beauvois, *Of Gods and Men* portrays the life of seven French Cistercian monks of Tibhirine who in 1996 were victims of a civil war, a bloody conflict between the Algerian state and Muslim terrorist groups. At first glance, it is easy to see these monks as victims and martyrs and they are without doubt.

However, it could be to our advantage to take a closer look in terms of the spiritual and psychological transformation—the monks wrestled with the idea whether to flee or to stay: their hesitations, their fears, their decisions, their motivations that led them to take position, their pride, their love for their Muslim friends that led them to the sacrifice. At the end of the story, many questions remain: The decision to stay—was it a good one? The prior of the community—did he influence the group? Martyrdom—does it justify or encourage barbarism? Spiritual pride—did it play a role in the unfolding events? Evidently, these questions must be asked in light of the film and not in light of its historical reality.

The movie reminds us that the courageous, the coward, the serene, the violent, all share the same human condition—

a human nature that is fickle, conscious though not always, more or less coherent and reacting to life as it comes. Persecution against Christians is on the rise—making the headlines. It could be fruitful to avoid portraying the world in black and white but rather try to grasp it in all of life's richness and complexities.

Hervé Pichenaud

*Considering the above critique, let us hear what the last living monk of Tibhirine has to say. The French magazine *Le Figaro* interviewed Brother Jean Pierre; below is an excerpt.*

Last Monk of Tibhirine testifies

Le Figaro: *Knowing that death was awaiting you, why did you remain at Tibhirine?* Bro. Jean Pierre: *In fidelity to our vocation we chose to stay, knowing full well what could happen. The Lord sends us, we don't resign even if all around us there are violent attempts to make us leave, even coming from officials. We have our Master and we are committed to Him. Secondly, we had the desire to be faithful to the local people, we did not want to abandon them; they also were threatened. They were caught in the crossfire between the army and terrorists. In 1993, we decided not to separate.*

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Deep Into the Well

What makes this world so lovely
is that somewhere it hides a well.
There is something lovely about a well
so deep and real, filled with buckets
of that life-giving drink.

Sometimes people are like wells
deep and real, natural, life-giving.
They bring out what is best in you
they are like fountains of pure joy
they make you want to sing and laugh.
Maybe that is why
things never stay rough
once you have found a well.

Some experiences are like wells too.
They are life-giving happenings,
they are redeeming experiences,
they are wells of wonder, wells of hope.
When you find a well,
drink deeply of the gift within.
Then, maybe soon, you will discover
that you've become what you have received;
and you will be a well for others to find.

M. Wiederkehr

