

MIC

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Mission News



To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

HAITI

TiMOUN
IS ALIVE

BOLIVIA

CERRO RICO

*Channels of
Tenderness*

PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

JULY

We pray for women in mission territories — *That all women religious and lay in mission territories witness the Gospel and be living signs Christ's love.*

AUGUST

We pray for the Christians in western countries — *May they be open to the Holy Spirit's action and rediscover their faith with enthusiasm.*

SEPTEMBER

We pray for the christian communities in Asia — *May these communities proclaim the Gospel with fervour, witnessing their faith with inner joy.*

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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Love Me Tender!

Do you remember the song *Love Me Tender*? It was once a big hit. In a world where we witness wars, violence, brutality, indifference, could we not say that our humanity is in need of authentic love and tenderness? With greater compassion, affection, and understanding, our human relationships would be deeply enriched and perhaps life would be more pleasant—somewhat easier to cope with.

Tenderness? It's a quality of the heart which pays attention to the other with openness and respect, it proposes without constraining. A characteristic of tenderness is to reach out with care, calling forth reciprocity.

How good it is to see sons and daughters bringing comfort to their elderly parents. Observe the young couple when they welcome their first child; hear the engaged couples planning their future; see the parents who work to provide for their children; the grandparents who pamper their grandchildren. All these actions reveal a deep love expressed with great tenderness. God has given us a heart with which to love. It is beautiful to sing about it, but more marvelous it is to put it into practice.

Could it be possible that one day there would be no more abandoned or mistreated children, no more elderly people living in solitude and distress, no more battered women... *The strength to love* proclaimed by Martin Luther King, has little to do with reasonable accommodations but rather with respecting each person's aspirations and culture. How is it possible to help people if I do not love and have compassion, if I have no tender feelings for those who are victims of our lack of care? Is our world in need of tenderness?

Produced by a Filipino artist, the masterpiece which appears on the cover of this issue is astonishing. Such tenderness! Take time to contemplate this touching scene... Without any doubt it will speak to your heart and will fill you with a feeling of tender love so much needed in our world of today; it is the indispensable cement, the essential element for a more humane society. Do you not believe that if we reached out with greater tenderness, there would be fewer wars, less violence, less hatred, less people left in despair?

With the One who, out of love, offered His life for us, may the summer season give you time to be for others what He is for you, for each one of us.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, 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.

FR. SANTOS VILLAHERMOSA

Every time I received the quarterly issue of your MIC Mission News, I always wondered the identity of the generous person behind this beautiful gift to whom I owe a word of thanks and my deep gratitude. Finally, I have just learned that it is my former principal of Holy Cross of Kiblawan in the person of Sr. Antoinette—the person whom I admired very much because she was part of the history of my vocation story to the priesthood. I do enjoy reading your magazine as it is very informative; it depicts the work of your mission *ad gentes* to all the corners of the world.

DOROTHÉE GUY
Laval, QC

I just received the Fall issue of your magazine. It is the most beautiful publication that I receive. I keep in mind the story of the Infant Jesus related by Sr. Monique Bigras.

MAURICE COMEAU, PASTOR
St. Sylvain Parish
Laval, QC

I have been receiving your magazine for many years and it is a delight to read. I must say that the presentation, the content, the openness in heart and spirit inspire me.

DRAW:

Mr. & Mrs. Roger Salhani, Mount Royal, Quebec, are the happy winners of the pumice stone figurine from Haiti. Congratulations to you both!



TENDERNESS —WHERE HAS IT GONE?

The “work” of the Resurrected Jesus is on-going in our world. The contemporary signs of His Resurrection are not only for the Church to see but for all who seek His Love, His Tenderness, His Compassion. With a discerning Spirit, all can discover His Presence.



André Gadbois

Recently, I saw a French Canadian film—*Tom à la ferme*; it told the story of a young man who was naturally good, gentle and sensitive, consciously becoming a violent, vengeful person. What brought the change? Isolation, indifference, and the hypocrisy of the milieu all contributed to the down fall of this man. I think the story represents a 21st century reality as did the parables which Jesus spoke to help people understand certain facts. Different eras, different cultures but nevertheless these stories, told in today’s

movies or in the parables of old, incite us to seek-out human tenderness. They tell us to question our thinking about Life, to set-out and search the Truth rather than feel we have arrived and settled in the promised land for good.

TO SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Jesus lived in a town and country submitted to the Roman Empire. He was attentive to the culture of His time. He was critical but never condemned anyone. Jesus walked along the river banks, the

lake shores, the fields. He was WITH His contemporaries and they followed Him, listened to His words and witnessed His actions. Using parables Jesus would often make a point saying: *Look at the children; look at the flute player; look at the gardener who sows; look at the father who welcomes home his wayward son; look at the hungry crowd...*

Like a mustard seed deep in the soil, Jesus was totally immersed in His culture; His people inspired Him. He seemed to have no intent in distinguishing between the profane and the sacred. He did not seem drawn to liturgical details, or to laws that excluded, nor did He seek power. His gaze was turned towards people and not towards the earthly temples. He worked for His Father and presented Himself as the humble servant of God's eternal plan which is to give Life in all its fullness to all the hearts that are open to Him. For Jesus, each individual life was important: *If you knew the gift of God* (Jn 4:10). He had a way of looking at people; He had a way of looking above and beyond the appearances; He could see the invisible.

READ THE SIGNS OF TIMES

This humble servant was shunned because He pushed aside the obstacles that stood in the way of Life in its fullness. And He was put to death—the abuse of power has always been and the abusers have always been skillful. But Jesus' Father raised Him from the dead and spread the Breath of His Son that His Divine Plan may be fulfilled. Signs of His Presence and of His Resurrection are still in our midst, in our societies—lay or religious. Do we know how to discern the signs and reveal them to our world?

Considering the world-wide cultures and the ways people live their daily lives, do we know how to scrutinize the signs of the times?—a phrase frequently used by the late Pope John XXIII during the Vatican Council II. This is a task, a ministry for all Christians to undertake—to be with others who in the name of their respective beliefs struggle against desperation, cyni-

cism. Through such an endeavor we discover that the Gospel, though not labeled as such, is at work because the Resurrected Christ is not the Church's property but belongs to the whole of Humanity.

In the footsteps of the Prophet of Nazareth who assured us of His Presence, it is our responsibility as disciples and witnesses of the Resurrected Christ to not only be aware and point out the signs that reveal resurrection, new life, and growth but also to be attentive to those individuals hidden behind the scenes in movies, in novels, in plays. To be aware of those people working in laboratories, in hospitals, in health care facilities; to be mindful of those who serve humanity in various ways; those who gather to abolish dictatorial governments. Who they are and what they stand for resonates in every fiber of society. As stated in GAUDIUM ET SPES: *The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.*¹

¹ The Documents of Vatican II, *The Church Today* (The America Press 1966), 199, no. 1

The Resurrected Christ belongs to the whole of Humanity. ~

For individuals as well as for nations the art of living together is a challenge. However, our future depends on our capacity to accept our differences and to live out our diversity in harmony. Salt of the earth, Christians should be the first to extend Christ's tender compassion to all without exclusion and like Jesus walk with our contemporaries to help them discover Him in their thoughts, their longings, their art, their creativity. In his book, *IL Y A TROP D'IMAGES*, Bernard Émond wrote: *Human tenderness contains all the reasons and elements necessary to resist that which dehumanizes the human heart.* When gentleness, tenderness are manifested, we are nearer to God's greatest commandment. ~

Raspberry and Coffee Flavor

Isn't this a surprising title to present the Society of Foreign Missions (PME) and celebrate with them their 90th Foundation Anniversary? Yet, it can be justified historically. These committed priests have been heroic, even martyrs, in their pursuit of Christ's Mission. Throughout the years, these missionaries have retained that pleasant flavor.



From the very beginning, family ties have been woven between us: first, by the foundation of the Society and the other by sharing the Mission in eight countries abroad. The primary goal of our foundations is to bring Christ and His Message of Love around the world. Though their daily agendas are always full, these priests make time to serve as Chaplains, ministering to the spiritual needs of the MIC Sisters. Amazingly, many times God has called the brother and the sister of a same family to a vocation that was both religious and missionary. One would enter the Society of Foreign Missions while the other would enter the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. This is the reason why, in a friendly manner, we call them *our brothers*.

These men of prayer, of service, of simplicity are totally committed to the populations which are marginalized and excluded. They welcome war refugees, they work with street children, they speak on behalf of all those who have no voice and for the sake of justice they are involved. They have learned to read the Bible with their heart. They manifest God's love, compassion and tenderness; they live in solidarity with all the peoples where they serve in order to give meaning to their lives. Everywhere they have been at work as missionaries, they have opened human paths where meeting a personal God is offered to all.



Marie-Paule
Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

IN THE MIDST OF RASPBERRIES

In the early 20th century, the missionary era radiated and the Church of Quebec had to take its place in the wide universal mission field. Délia Tétreault's blazing soul had understood that. One day, as she was in a field picking raspberries, she had an inspiration—a time will come when a Seminary of Foreign Missions will be established on Canadian soil. She had a prophetic vision!

She confided to her Sisters: *One day, I was at my uncle's house in the countryside and I went to pick raspberries with my cousins. While I was busy collecting the berries, I saw in my mind a huge house, somewhat like a monastery and it was full of priests; there was another house and that one was full of nuns.* This inspired vision took place round about 1883-84 and was fulfilled in 1921, after years of difficulties. It must be specified that Délia was not the Foundress of the Society of Foreign Missions but she was the catalyst. Fr. Charles-Aimé Bolduc, PME, expressed that very well during a symposium on Délia Tétreault which took place in Montreal, in the year 1994. Délia herself wanted to be the motor that generated the foundation of this particular society. That was her role.

AND THE CUP OF COFFEE?

Délia, a woman of great faith, knew that her duty was to motivate the bishops in acknowledging the importance of this foundation. She also knew that God

wanted something *new* and not a simple branch grafted onto the old tree of the Foreign Missions Seminary in Paris. With confidence she would say: *Let us give God the freedom to act* and that is what happened. Most of the bishops were not in favor of this project. So, Msgr. Bruchési, then Archbishop of Montreal, said to Délia: *If you want a Canadian Seminary, find me the priests!*

In 1920, a young priest somewhat feeling tired while walking stopped at the MIC Mother House and asked for a cup of coffee. Mother Délia welcomed him and 'MISSION' was at the heart of the conversation. The young priest acknowledged that he always had a desire to commit himself to this cause. God was present! The first sign of God's Will was in the person of Father Adelmar Lapierre who became the leader of the Szepingkaï Diocese in Manchuria, China. And the history of the Society of Foreign Missions (PME) grew in vocations. All this, thanks to a cup of coffee...

TODAY, WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE FLAVOR?

These missionaries are more than ever avant-gardists and look to the future. They have many associates, lay missionaries from multi-ethnic backgrounds who dedicate themselves to the MISSION. The lay missionary involvement is in full bloom. Having been through an adequate training, they assume their Christian responsibilities and are sent to various countries around the world. Men, women, priests, social workers, nurses, teachers, all of one heart, they work with the countryside peasants and in villages. They take on the challenges of the local Church; they promote the human and spiritual dimension of each person. These lay missionaries bring vitality and dynamism to the Society. In 1997, such a phenomenon called for a change in the name—formerly known as Priests of the Foreign Missions, (Prêtres des Missions Étrangères – PMÉ) they are now known as Society of Foreign Missions. They have been working in thirteen countries, namely: Philippines, Japan, China, Cambodia, Thailand, Cuba, Honduras, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Sudan and



Kenya without forgetting Canada where they are very active.

Following the socio-political upheaval in many countries and wanting to respond to Vatican II's preoccupations, the Society redefined its specific mission. They have oriented their energies and time in promoting mission awareness in Churches so as to awaken and inform the populations to the universal mission that is theirs as Christians. They are invited to take part in Christ's Mission beyond their own frontiers.

In 1988, in collaboration with us the MICs, they set up the Intercommunity Missionary Formation Program for the laity. The team was composed of representatives from: The Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, the Missionaries of Consolata, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and the Society of Foreign Missions. With the years the program was transformed and adjusted to new demands; it is still running successfully in Montreal and Quebec.

This year, the Society is celebrating the 90th Anniversary of its Foundation which was unanimously approved in 1921 by the Bishops of the Province of Quebec. They have many reasons to rejoice; they have been and still are witnesses of God's Gentle Love in the Canadian Church. Behind them there is a path which has been tread by a generation of fervent faith-filled missionaries. Now, they look ahead, willing to embrace new horizons filled with promising abundant fruits bearing the flavor of raspberries and coffee. We are delighted to savor it with them.

Happy Anniversary to our Brothers in Christ! ☪

¹ Regional assembly
— missionaries working in Chile,
Brazil and Peru, January 2010
Photo: M. Veilleux

TiMoun Is Alive

Years ago, *TiMoun Mysionè* was published and launched by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception who were in charge of the Pontifical Mission Works in Haiti. This mini magazine's goal is to foster the children's awareness of the missionary nature of the Church and to bring closer the young people. Despite the many hardships that have befallen Haitians, *TiMoun* has remained popular. It is a magazine that children love to read and that teachers use as a pedagogical tool to enhance interest in other youths around the world.

By *Marie-Rosette Lafortune, M.I.C.*



Up to this very day, *TiMoun* continues to be found in fifty schools throughout the country. This mini magazine presents the evangelical message, the Good News, in a language that children can understand; it opens the hearts to the universal concept that we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus. Since its foundation in 1983, the magazine went through hurdles strewn with audacity and courageous dynamism. Notwithstanding the unstable political situation of the country, the emigration of children abroad, *TiMoun* has remained a stable presence. It has been sharing all the ups and downs of the inhabitants and more so the great sorrow of so many families who lost children in the January 2010 earthquake.

TRAINING YOUNG PRESENTERS

Haitian children love stories, theatrical presentations, dramas; in the evening they often play *kric krac*—a guessing game. The Haitian culture has marvelous stories to educate and foster the interest of the young people to the Christian faith. *TiMoun's* editorial team takes care to research these stories which are touching and help the young ones to grow in their understanding of life. The magazine allows the children to appreciate, comment, judge, and apply what is good and appropriate for each one of them. The role of the presenter is to accompany the young ones in their discoveries and applications. *Radio Soleil*, which is the Catholic radio station of Port-au-Prince, reaches a wide

audience on the Island of Haiti. *TiMoun Mysionè* has been given a time slot where we can present the educational goal of the magazine. A team of young people prepares the content and youngsters participate in the broadcasting every Saturday; they become good hosts and actors. The high rated program is a great opportunity to get the message across. We have been observing that such participation truly changes the youngsters—they take their responsibilities seriously; they learn to work as a team and speak out in public. It is a real joy for them to participate in broadcasting their opinions, their convictions, etc.

A MOMENT OF ANTI STRESS

In the course of the year, particularly on Mission Sunday, there are Diocesan gatherings. These allow all the children and presenters of different schools to share and talk about their concerns. They also play together, sing, dance, speak about their ups and downs, share on the content of their favorite magazine *TiMoun Mysionè*, and then they celebrate. This is a privileged moment which they look forward to—it is considered as an anti stress day which is greatly appreciated by the students. Religious communities collaborate beautifully as they let us use the large spaces in their schools.

Thank you for your cooperative spirit, for believing in the mission and in the development of the youth through such an activity. I also thank our printer. He considers this magazine to be the 'child' of his printing press because he has been faithfully producing it for more than twenty-five years. Currently, the printing cost is 84000 Gourdes, in 2003 it was costing us 90850 Gourdes. The decrease is due to the circulation which went from 18,000 copies to 16,000 after the 2010 earthquake.

Below is a short sample of the publication which can be found in the October-December 2010 issue.

We give thanks to the Lord to have saved our lives after the January 12, 2010 earthquake. We remember all our loved ones who have left us. Today, in Haiti, to remain together, to work

as a team is an attitude we must nourish. This is the reason that for the first issue of the school year we have chosen the theme: Together and with Jesus, let us look ahead.

Dear subscribers, we are sorry for the many obstacles that have been in our way and prevented us from reaching out to all of you by way of telephone or visiting you in your respective schools in the months of May and June. Teachers, be assured that we are one with you in your search for means to appease the children's fears through various psychological and therapeutic activities. This dramatic event has spared no one; we must wish each other courage.

TiMoun Mysionè has been sharing all the ups and downs of the inhabitants.

What was routine for us before the earthquake, we must seek to rediscover, that is: find the strength to keep on living, intense prayers, joyful gatherings, smiles and laughter, fraternal activities, work well done, education for our children, family and neighborhood celebrations,... and so much more... Let us be courageous! God is with us!

It is within this momentum that the TiMoun Mysionè is trying to make a come-back. Even though all has been lost in the ruins of the building at the Port-au-Prince Archdiocesan center, we nevertheless are looking to the future. Because of the loss and the low budget, you will notice that the magazine has been somewhat modified.

Knowing that this magazine is an important anti-stress instrument for the children, we have begun distributing it free of charge in all the schools. Unfortunately, we have been unable to reach some schools because of the debris and obstacles after the earthquake; for those of you who have not yet received copies, please excuse us.

The joy with which the teachers and children welcomed *TiMoun Mysionè* greatly encouraged us. We are trying to keep this children's magazine alive, even though we have to start from scratch, because we believe in its effective message while encompassing a missionary dimension. With conviction and enthusiasm we look forward to the future. 

Channels of Tenderness



What impact do volunteers have in a correctional facility? Sr. Rollande Ouellet, M.I.C., who has been working in a penitentiary for the past forty years has witnessed the indispensable assistance they provide. Among the ex-offenders she is accompanying, she contacted Patrick; he tells us his viewpoint.

By *Patrick Parizeault*

Recently, I was asked to speak about what I think of the volunteers who generously work inside the WALLS—the walls of solitude, whether it be at a provincial prison or federal penitentiary, it's all the same. The best way to speak about the volunteers is to talk about my personal experience with them.

My name is Patrick, I am forty-six years of age. I was brought up in a dysfunctional family where alcohol and violence characterized my father. To save appearances, solitude was my only escape. I needed to leave this unhealthy milieu, so at seventeen I got married. I thought this would bring me joy, happiness and end my solitude. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Once again, I soon felt alone; I tried to fill the void with drugs and friends.

I was looking for compassion and understanding but instead I've known hell. Reluctantly, I witnessed a murder, I was so scared that I closed my eyes. According to the law, anyone who does nothing to prevent a murder or to call for help is just as responsible as the one who commits the crime. I was therefore condemned to prison for life. I, who had been seeking compassion and love from others so as to feel more human, was being rejected and put aside.

Whether you want it or not, the prison walls that enclose you gradually make you less human. We simply try to survive and everything becomes superficial. I had to find a way of keeping a mental balance and remain somewhat human.

I was invited to take part in meetings. This was my first contact with volunteers. At first I was skeptical and felt ill at ease because I judged myself as unworthy to be with these good people. I had difficulty understanding how ordinary people could give their time and love to individuals who are marginalized. I had lived through so much misery and betrayals that I could not imagine anyone could give of themselves gratuitously. I was like Thomas, the

apostle; I had to find a flaw somewhere. I could not believe.

Week after week, I went back to see these extraordinary people. At first, it was out of curiosity, I tried to find a weak point to prove my suspicion was correct. But then, I got caught in my own game. I discovered that within the prison walls there were people who could bring their affection and compassion towards the strangers who were incarcerated. I became addicted to their love—I looked forward to the meetings, I was impatient and wanted to be with them.

At last, the void in my life was being filled because I felt I was important to these people. They were preoccupied by my hurts, my sadness; they were interested in my feelings, my life, my scholarly feats and whatever came up during the week. I was finding what I had been searching for all my life. Of course, I kept experiencing solitude, but the volunteers helped me to overcome loneliness.

I had been incarcerated for six years when my wife decided to leave me after fourteen years of marriage and having had four children. I could understand her decision; however, what I did not understand was the fact she said she had never loved me. Unfortunately, she also had been carrying her own baggage. I had been for her some kind of social security, nothing more. I thus realized that I had lived fourteen years of illusions...

This breaking news was for me the most difficult moment in my life; everything became unreal and futile. My past came back to me as on a video tape and I could see but a series of failures. What I believed as true was actually false and vice-versa. During that period, I lost all hope in life and I stopped eating for thirty five days.

Then I lived my second important experience with the volunteers. As I became more isolated and wished to end that pitiful life of mine, I felt drawn to the chapel for a last visit with Him, the Lord. My distress was so great that people were afraid to look at me; however, a volunteer

came to me. At first, I tried to push him away because I wanted to remain isolated, but he made me understand that he had come for me and that I was important to him. Imagine, this old man, coming from nowhere, seeing me for the first time in his life, decided to sacrifice his evening for me who was on the brink of an abyss. I did not have to talk but simply sit by his side and listen to this man who wanted to share my burden.

¹ Sr. Rollande and Patrick

Photo Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

^{2,3} Patrick's paintings

Photo Credit: P. Parizeault



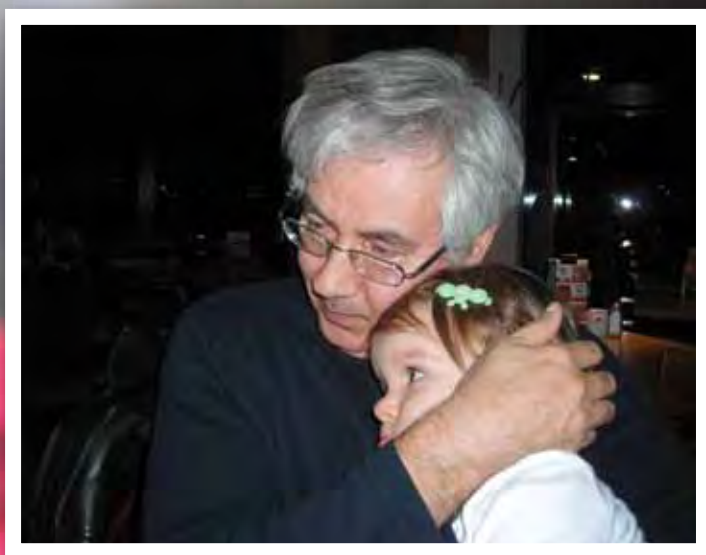
This man touched me deeply and he reignited within me what had been extinguished. Every week he came to see me and every week I looked forward to his visit because thanks to him his presence was helping me to come out of my despair. My contact with the unconditional love of those volunteers led me to see them for the first time with a new heart. Since then I have not been the same. From that moment on I reconciled myself with life. Without the volunteers I could never have survived hell on earth.

I have only love and respect towards all those devoted and affectionate people who transformed a stranger into a loving being. Strong bonds have been forged and sometimes they last for years; each volunteer without exception has a special place in my heart. Without them, I would not be here...they were for me channels of tenderness and from them I have learned to be a more gentle human being. ☺

This man touched me deeply and he reignited within me what had been extinguished.



*Tenderness is the
of a loving, caring*



*he manifestation
and listening heart.*

CERRO RICO

1

August 5, 2010—Eight hundred kilometers north of Santiago, Chile, a large San José copper-gold mine in the Atacama Desert caved in. Thirty-three Chilean miners were trapped seven hundred meters underground some five kilometers from the mine entrance. Working in the mines is a dangerous job. How many more accidents of the kind have occurred at different places but did not make the headlines and went almost unnoticed or unheard of. Upon seeing the Chile event, Suzanne remembered a very unique experience—her trip to the metal desert.

By Suzanne Lachapelle

Have you ever gone down a mine? After having read Paul Ohl's book, *Black Sun*, in which he describes the tragic destiny of the Incas people, I felt urged to go see with my own eyes the place where so many human lives have been lost. I travelled to Bolivia precisely to Potosi, famous for being the highest city in the world and for the reddish mountain looming above it where the Cerro Rico mine is known as the largest in the world.

This mountain is the largest graveyard in the world... more than six million people have died there for fifty thousand tons of silver.¹ Looking at the mountain for the first time we found it beautiful with its red and gold

rays. It is said that so much silver has been extracted from Cerro Rico that a bridge made up of this metal could be built over the Atlantic Ocean. Nowadays, there are but a few colonial houses that remain in Potosi to remind us of the prosperous past of that city.

When I visited the mine, the miners were not working because it was their day-off. The mine is no longer exploited by multinational companies or entrepreneurs; however, the local miners continue probing the depths of Cerro Rico hoping to find residual caches of silver ore. The miners' working conditions remain medieval, security is minimum, health risks are high, the work is hard and dangerous, the revenue is less than the minimum. The women work outside the mine; they search in the debris where there is not much of a chance to find anything.



THEY KEEP HOPING

At the entrance of the mine there is a statue *El Tio* which represents the god of the mine. After offering him cigarettes or alcohol, the miners enter the tunnels walking half bent because the low ceilings. If you are not wearing a helmet, look out for your head. The mine has many openings but some are as small as a man hole. All day long, the men climb ladders their bags filled with stone chippings. They explode dynamite charges at will, no matter the danger. In the city there are stalls of dynamite sticks and hessian sacks full of coca leaves, the inhabitants' Tylenol.

Why do men continue coming to this lifeless mine? For the livelihood of their families! Fatalism and resignation is another reason—"my grandfather was a miner, my father was a miner, I am also a miner" they say.

The mines are dark but with my flashlight I could see the brilliancy of dust particles still imprisoned in the rock. There is absolutely no life in the mineral universe, *not even a mouse* said my tour guide because it would have nothing to eat. Men eat very little, it is impossible for them to bring a lunch due to the dust that would infiltrate the food and spoil it. So they chew enormous wads of coca leaves that help them keep going.

FAMILY LIFE

When miners come out of the mine at the end of the day or at night time, they must sleep. Since most of them live in a one room house, cohabitation is not easy. The children must go outside and make no noise; using rudimentary installations, the women organize themselves to wash and dry the clothes. Notwithstanding their great poverty and harshness of life, the inhabitants are believers. Their syncretistic beliefs are a combination of Catholicism and the ancient gods. It is with respect and attachment that the people continue celebrating the ancient divinities.

Upon our return home, we ponder upon what we have seen. The many injustices do not leave us indifferent but we do feel powerless before such misery. The knowledge we have acquired, the awareness of the living conditions of the miners help us to be attentive to their plight. After such a trip, we realize that we all have a duty to keep alive in our memory those great tragedies which have been too quickly and easily forgotten. 🌀

Notwithstanding their great poverty and harshness of life, the inhabitants are believers.



¹ Paul Ohl, *Black Sun*, 187

Photos

¹ Suzanne & the miners

² Suzanne climbs out of the mine

³ The miners

⁴ The Cerro Rico Mountain
—Potosi

Photos Credit: C. Guévin



3

4

A Mission in Action...

FAITH AND LIGHT



Huguette Turcotte,
M.I.C.

Author Norman Rice once said: Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness to pull another hand into the light. Many people put this statement into practice. Individuals give their time and spend their energies being channels of comfort and of tenderness for others to see the light in their lives; we see them working at l'Arche, we see them with groups such as Faith and Light. Sr. Adrienne Guay, M.I.C. has been journeying with such people; the following is an interview with her.

¹ Sr. Adrienne & a volunteer
Photo Credit: MIC

² Meeting at the Center

³ The group at Ciney
Photos Credit: A. Guay, M.I.C.

For more information:
www.lepelerin.org

SR. HUGUETTE: Hello Sr. Adrienne! I heard that in April you went on a pilgrimage at Lourdes with a group from Faith and Light. How long have you been involved in this world wide movement which I know very little about? Can you present it to me?

SR. ADRIENNE: The year after my return from Madagascar in 2000, I began searching for a place where I could be involved in a ministry according to our MIC Pastoral Plan. I met Father Robert Choquette, C.S.C. from St-Joseph's Oratory who spoke to me about *Le Pèlerin*—a training center dedicated to spiritual guidance; it also helps anyone in search of meaning in life. In October 2001, I began journeying with young adults and with others who were interested in receiving a formation in this area. I was privileged to meet so many people who became precious friends.

I became acquainted with *Faith and Light* at Guylaine Pelletier's funeral. I had accompanied this young woman at a time when she was preparing for her mission. She had become the provincial coordinator of *Faith and Light* in the Eastern part of Canada. In Edmundston, New Brunswick, where the funeral took place, I met her collaborators, François Pageau, Mrs Ghislaine Jarry, and Sr. Denise Labelle, C.S.C.; some time later I met them again in Montreal. I learned that *Faith and Light* is an association which was founded in France in 1971 by Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu. Today there are more than 1610 communities of about 25-30 people each, flourishing in eighty one countries. They meet regularly for sharing, prayer and celebration. These communities differ from l'Arche communities where those who have developmental disabilities have their living quarters with those who assist them. The founders of Faith and Life have a deep desire to pave a way for all humans, disabled or not, in the realm of Church and society. They transmit the deep conviction that all are loved by God, just the way they are. The handicapped are very open and in all simplicity express their feelings. They have a deep intuition and sense of God's Word. In other words, they evangelize us! I have been touched by the ideal of this association whose mission is to support and encourage families who live with handicapped persons.

SR. HUGUETTE: *The pilgrimage at Lourdes was a beautiful gift to offer them. The training*



session you followed in Belgium, was it in the line of Faith and Light?

SR. ADRIENNE: Yes, last November I was a delegate with three other members of the East Canadian Province Team. We were 68 people from 16 French speaking countries; we came together at Ciney, south of Belgium. It was an unforgettable experience. The content of the lectures was most enriching. Interacting with other colleagues who have the same ideal was uplifting. The arrangements for hospitality which you had made for us at the Daughters of Wisdom were very much appreciated; we were welcomed warmly. Sr. Jacqueline, D.W. who escorted us made it easier for us to get around. Your friend, Françoise took us on an excursion to Bruges then to Passendale and Ypres where we discovered the cemeteries from the First World War. Such cultural exchange and international meetings are most enriching.

SR. HUGUETTE: *What has been your involvement with the youth when you participated in some of the World Youth Days?*

SR. ADRIENNE: As guide, I accompanied the youth to Toronto, Cologne and Australia. Prior to the World Youth Day, I prepared small groups of four to eight participants;

to this effect, the Archdiocese of Montreal printed a handbook in which we find the guidelines. Young people are prepared spiritually—Scripture reading, meditation, sharing, praying together are all part and parcel of their preparation. They are also invited to join the *Faith and Light* group when they come together.

The international level events attract thousands of youth from every country in the world. Pilgrims who attend World Youth Day participate in a variety of youth activities such as: visiting cathedrals, attending daily catechesis, receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist, praying before the Blessed Sacrament during hours of adoration; re-enactment of Christ's passion during the Stations of the Cross. This year, World Youth Day will be held in Madrid, Spain, from August 15th until the 21st, 2011. The Seed of Life is being sown in the hearts of so many...

I am also involved with '*Mission Jeunesse*' at the Diocesan level and at the MIC Community level with '*Pastorale Jeunesse*'. In 2009, '*Fiesta*' another youth group prepared a feast to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the MIC Sisters' departure for China. Some members of that group who call themselves '*Mission in Action*' come together to reflect, and dedicate some time to Mission

work here at home. They encourage each other in keeping up their commitments to the Diocesan Church. A few months ago, one of them, Adreanne, became a member of the organizing committee.

SR. HUGUETTE: *No doubt that being present and also spiritual guide demands deep motivations and a long term commitment. From your experience what advice would you give to people who would want to orient their life in this kind of volunteer work?*

SR. ADRIENNE: In all of these commitments the first attitude to have is to reflect God's tender loving care for each individual and try to respond to the fundamental need of each human being: *To love and be loved*. Gratitude is an essential element of the heart in order to accomplish the Lord's Mission and express one's joy in experiencing Jesus' Presence. The only real happiness, is it not in meeting the One who is truly humanly full of tenderness for His creatures and in turn transforms us to be authentically human?

SR. HUGUETTE: *Yes, I do agree. We are all on a pilgrimage towards new horizons and happy are those who along the way can find brothers and sisters full of compassion and tenderness. Sr. Adrienne, thank you for this interview and I wish you well!* ☺



MAHATAMANA'S Project—A Promising Future for Madagascar



It is worthwhile to invest manpower, time, energy and money when a mission project responds to the needs of a population whose future is most promising.

By Marie-Colette Raeliarisoa, M.I.C.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have been present in Madagascar since 1952. In many regions of the country they have established primary and secondary schools, as well as literacy and health-care centers. Currently there are forty-eight Sisters, half of whom are young Madagascan women in formation. These young religious share the pre-occupations of the population; well aware of the needs of the villagers surrounding them, they are committed to serve. To this effect, they are offering a dynamic

renewal which is most promising for the local people.

At Mahatamana the Madagascan MIC Sisters have begun a project called the *Rural Formation Center*. Though not yet completed, the Center is operational. Having studied the new rice farming method (SRI) one of the young Sisters teaches the local people how to use this type of cultivation which requires no flooding of fields yet produces an abundant harvest. This initiative, which is implemented on their large piece of land, will boost the region's economy. The education of women is also a priority at the Center.

¹ SRI is a success

² The building project

³ Learning to cultivate the land

⁴ Learning a trade

⁵ The new dental chair

Photos Credit: MIC

Here, illiteracy among women is high and this lack has a negative repercussion on the families' evolution. To counter this situation the Center has set up a literacy program for women; they also learn new cooking methods, they are given sewing lessons and are empowered to look after their families' needs effectively.

The goals of the Center are numerous. To mention a few: the establishment of infrastructures is most necessary for the socio-economic development of the region. Hands-on experiments in agriculture and developing the young peoples' technical and professional abilities are of utmost importance. The Center is a place where the local people can come to with their micro projects. Here they receive the support and the encouragement they need to pursue their dreams. At the same time, the Center contributes in consolidating the viability of the MIC mission work in Madagascar.

This initiative has been approved by the Bishop of Antsirabe, Msgr. Philippe Ranaivomanana and the project is in its last phase. The construction of the right wing is now underway: the kitchen, cafeteria, dormitory and personnel quarters are gradually being built. The population which is benefitting from this Rural Formation Center is generously offering the manpower.

I wholeheartedly thank all the people who have contributed in some way...great or small in helping us realize our dream. For those who wish to take part in this ongoing project and support the local people of Mahatamana, please write to:

**MIC Mission Procure
Mahatamana Project**

121 Maplewood Avenue
Montreal, QC
H2V 2M2

E-mail: secretariat.gen@gmail.com



MAHEREZA – THANK YOU – MAHEREZA

An article which appeared in the MIC Mission News (April-June 2010), received some attention. The Social Center Mahereza (courage in the Malagasy language) depicted the pressing needs of a population in the surrounding villages of Tananarive, Madagascar. The article ended with a vibrant call for a dentist, but there was no response because of obsolete dental equipment and lack of a dental chair. Yes, the young as well as the adults have toothaches and we all know how painful even intolerable these can be.

A generous heart heard the cry and paid for a dental chair which has been recently installed at the Center. This new chair and equipment has become an attraction for certain dentists who offer their services at a minimal cost. What a joy for this poor population! How to thank this very generous donor who has been most sensitive to the suffering of others? Now, every morning, people patiently wait for their turn to sit in that modern chair and to receive the adequate treatment each one needs.

Our heartfelt *“Thank You”* to this very generous person.

Show Me Tenderness



Véronique Martel

About the author:

Véronique Martel has a BA Degree in linguistics and French literature. She is also interested in cultures and visual arts. The author is a literary chronicler on the Radio Ville-Marie station.

A wide gap exists between violence and tenderness. When I turn on the television I see upheavals in North Africa, food is too expensive, employment is scarce. So people take to the streets to cry out their despair. The ruling leader does not appreciate this protest—he sends his men to control the masses. I change the channel: the earth shook, water devastated a whole city... and the disaster at Tchernobyl seems to be repeating itself. Radiation from the nuclear plants worries many; will it be harmful? No, no is the reply given to the population. We'll see if the future generations will be born with congenital defects, be web-footed or have strange facial deformities...

Not only do men exercise violence against each other, nature is also at war with us. Worse, it is human activity that is causing disturbance in nature (pollution, excessive exploitation of land and water ways). Why is it so difficult to surrender the arms, to stop the shouting, to simply express tenderness? However, I am not an unrealistic optimist. I don't believe that all peoples will one day hold each other by the hand, sing together while preparing a rainbow cake with roses. I do not pursue a utopian dream, but I like to believe in change, an awakening of consciousness. The contemporary world scene truly looks like a Hollywood scenario that depicts the end of the world. We need hope!

True, many humanitarian aid organizations are deployed here and there on our planet (the MICs are part of these). *Greenpeace*, *One Drop* and others collect funds to save trees, plants, and endangered species of animals but to me this is not enough. I am not complaining about the humanitarian aid agencies or about those organizations who uphold the rights of people. I am complaining about the general collective inaction. How is it that the fate of a nation, of the planet, is in the hands of only a few individuals? On one hand, I don't believe in a collective chore where all of us would tackle the job of building a happy home made of sugar and spice. On the other hand, developing a human consciousness is a must—whereby mutual support and tenderness would be tangible and drawn from an inner peaceful strength.

If a massive change or planetary action seems impossible, the awakening of consciousness could be life saving. A short anecdote: When I was nine years old, my teacher, Mrs. Vincent taught me to smile. She maintained that my smile could not heal the sick, reconcile nations or stop acid rain but it could appease pain and sorrow and erase harm done. The idea was simple: instead of responding aggressively to insults, I had to smile; instead of being turned-off by an unpleasant person, I smiled. Believe it or not, this simple act of smiling made all the difference. Violence calls forth violence, a smile calls forth tenderness. 



Dawn of a New Life

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



Marie-Jeanne Doyon, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Placide)
1910-2010
Saint-Frédéric de Beauce, QC

God's ways are so mysterious! At a very young age, Marie-Jeanne was already dreaming of China. At twenty, she entered the MIC Novitiate. During her formation years it was revealed to her that she was destined for the missions in Manchuria. But the Lord decided otherwise... after her final vows she was struck with tuberculosis and was confined twenty years in a sanatorium in Nominigüe. After recovery, she served in Quebec, Ottawa, Montreal, Rimouski. While in authority she made life pleasant for her companions and her many talents brought joy to the local communities. Barely two months before her 100th birthday she quietly passed away. Her long Magnificat continues to re-echo in the Father's House.



Carmelle Delisle, M.I.C.
(Sr. Jeanne-de-Lorraine)
1920-2010
Pont-Rouge, QC

Sister Carmelle was a happy and devoted woman who highly valued interpersonal relationships. After her initial formation, she was ten years at our retreat house in Quebec City. Malawi and Zambia were her mission countries. Talented in culinary art she taught the African women new skills to improve their cooking. At the hospital of Kanyanga she was the ambulance driver; her clever driving on bush roads saved many lives. In 1981, she came back to Quebec and continued her apostolate ministering to the sick. Pont-Viau welcomed her in 2000; it is here that the Lord came to fetch His beloved in her sleep, she was ninety. Dear Sr. Carmelle, rest in the Peace and the Love of your God.



Marie-Jeanne Fortin, M.I.C.
(Sr. Alphonse-Marie)
1919-2010
Saint-Octave-de-Métis, QC

When speaking about her childhood years, Sr. Marie-Jeanne described herself as a mischievous child. At fourteen she quit school in order to help her sick mother with the household chores. This put an end to her dream: get a teacher's degree. Marie-Jeanne was twenty-one when she entered the MIC Institute. Her first assignments were in the Quebec Province. Thirteen years later she was assigned to Malawi. During her thirty-four years in Africa she committed herself to pastoral work—we saw her at the dispensary, at the center teaching the illiterate women, she travelled to the outstations to help in catechetical instructions. Prayerful, practical, dedicated, Sr. Marie-Jeanne leaves us with good memories. May she now rest in His Love.



Jeannine Blanchard, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte-Émilienne)
1929-2011
Sherbrooke, QC

Jeannine was the eldest of six children. Sociable, amiable, sporty, she enjoyed being with friends and celebrate life; however this did not undermine her wish to become a missionary. At age twenty-two she entered our Institute; five years later she was appointed to serve in Japan. Sr. Jeannine was twenty-three years at Koriyama, teaching English and twenty-five years at Aizu Wakamatsu as principal of the primary school. Wisdom in decision making was her characteristic. Her calm reaction managed to save all the children and teachers from a ravaging fire during school hours. Until the very end of her life Sr. Jeannine maintained her brilliant smile even through her speechless years. Her entire personality was a symphony of love.

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Prayer for Today's Youth

*God of tenderness
we offer you today's youth
which is full of life
and searching for meaning.*

*May the light of your grace
guide each of these young people
in their daily challenges.*

*Come to show them that
every young person has value
each one is loved by You and
by the adults around them.*

*Bless these young people
with the gift of Hope
that they may believe in tomorrow
and trust in their ability
to change something
in the world now.*

*Bestow upon them
the gift of Joy
that they may celebrate
life in truth.*

*And for ourselves,
we ask you Lord,
love, patience and faith in youth;
may our vision,
at once lucid and tender
allow us to capture their reality.*

*Give us the courage
of a continuous conversion
that we may be
inspiring witnesses for them.*

*We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen!*

(WYD – Madrid)



Photo Credit: MIC