

MIC MISSION NEWS

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To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

PHILIPPINES

**A RADICAL
OPTIMIST
BRINGS HOPE.**

JAPAN

ARE YOU ZEN?

IN FOCUS

DARE TO ACT!



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

JANUARY

WE PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD — That the dedication of Christians to peace may bear witness to the name of Christ before all men and women of good will.

FEBRUARY

WE PRAY FOR ALL HEALTH WORKERS — That the Lord may sustain the efforts of health workers assisting the sick and elderly in the world's poorest regions.

MARCH

WE PRAY FOR THE MANY PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS — May the Holy Spirit grant perseverance to those who suffer discrimination, persecution, or death for the name of Christ, particularly in Asia.

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

THINK BIG!

Nowadays, performance and productivity are a ‘must’. To think big is a priority. Politically—in Quebec, Canada, it’s all about the Northern Plan, one of the largest sites of economic, social and environmental development of our time. Commercially—large retail establishments keep expanding. Financially—reaping massive profits is essential; recently, this greed has provoked non-violent protesters to *Occupy Wall Street*. Agriculturally—excessive production has no limit. We live in a society where success has to be attained. We invest to be efficient and to accumulate greater profits. We always want more!

Could we say that Jesus Himself would have had His place in such a society? Did He not multiply the five loaves and two fish to feed the hungry crowd? Did He not fill to the brim the six stone water jars with the best of wine? And what about the miraculous catch of fish which surprised the apostles who had worked hard all night without catching anything.

There is nothing wrong with performance and thinking big. It is important to risk and take action. New inventions, new techniques can enhance our performance but, there is a “but”. Jesus did not act to dazzle but to feed the hungry; He did not act to become rich but to help the less fortunate.

We are well aware that world-wide, the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming wider. Narrowing the wealth gap proves to be most challenging; however, there are humanitarian organizations who work at it. Consider—*CECI* (Center for International Studies and Cooperation), *Peace and Development*, *Oxfam*, *Terre Sans Frontières* (World Without Borders), these and others work diligently to improve the lives of many and we congratulate them. There are also individuals whose actions touch the hearts and lives of the multitude. Think of Tony Meloto in the Philippines and elsewhere in Asia or in Haiti where people take charge with ingenuity. Closer to home and to highlight the International Year of Cooperatives, let’s take a look at all the work that is being done in collective kitchens, community gardens and in centers where volunteers reach out to the elderly.

God created us to live with dignity and not to live a life of misery. He counts on each one of us to make this world a better place to live in and we are called to take action in whatever way possible. The Lenten Season invites us to think big and to dare take action.

Marie-Paule Sanjacon, m.i.c.

DÉLIA’S COLUMN

COOPERATION

The spirit of cooperation was important to Délia Tétreault and on certain occasions she significantly revealed this in her letters. Following are a few excerpts from her writings.

COOPERATION WITH GOD

— I feel urged to say and repeat to you: We live for the sole interests of God, let us therefore *cooperate* wholeheartedly in spreading His Kingdom that He may be loved and served by all.

COOPERATION WITH THE CHURCH

— Your Excellency, if you wish once again to accept our humble *cooperation* in this new mission which we equally love, we would be happy to send some Sisters to Vancouver who would help in beginning this important foundation for the good of the Chinese population.

COOPERATION THROUGH SUFFERING

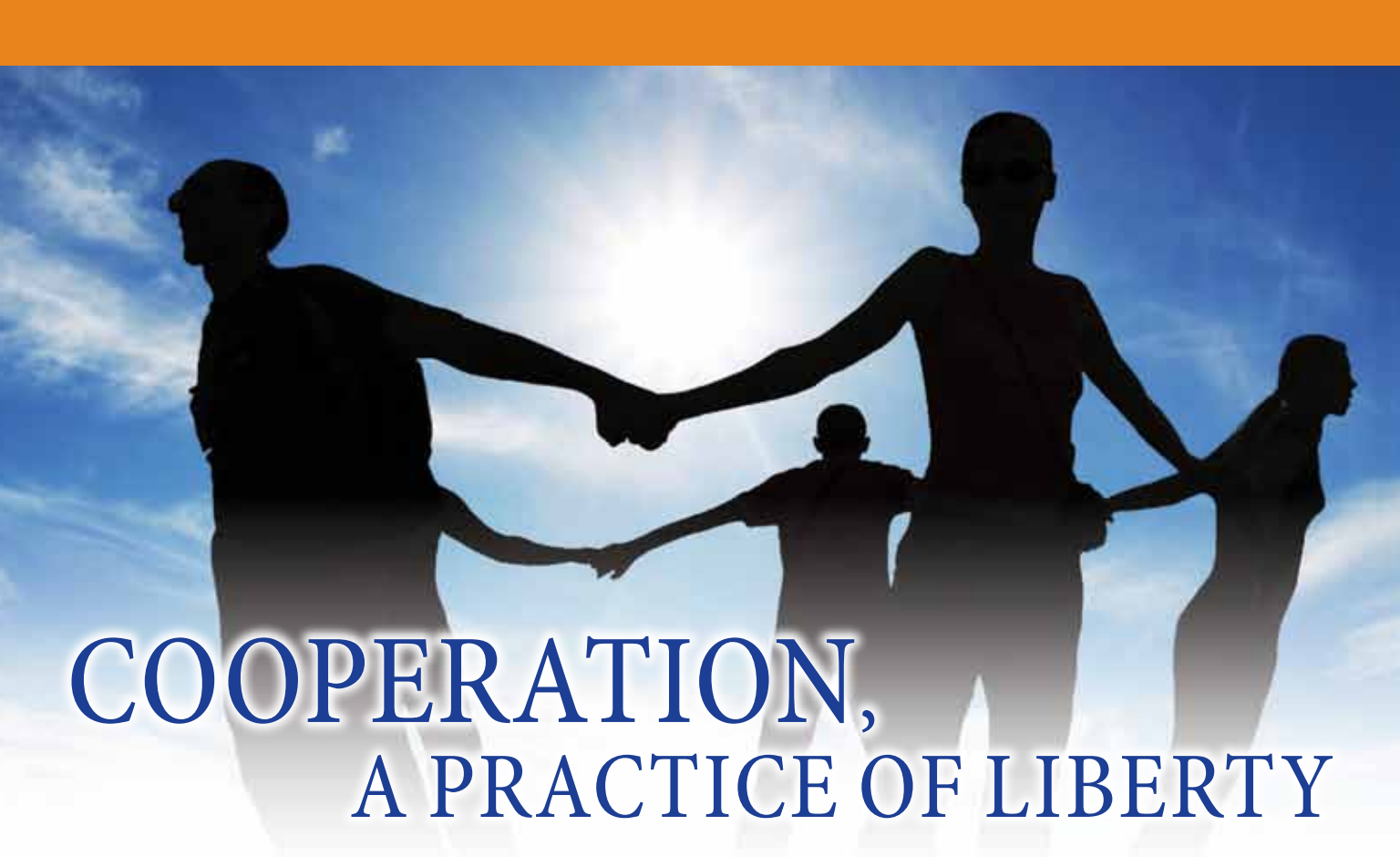
— Be persuaded that those same sufferings mentioned in your letters were the necessary kind of *cooperation* you needed to offer for the salvation of those little ones who have been entrusted to your care.

COOPERATION WITH ONE’S SELF

— You must absolutely be healed; God is too good to refuse me this favor. However, you must *cooperate!*

∞

Due to a limited budget and personnel, our magazine the *MIC Mission News* has been reduced to 24 pages. Rest assured that the quality of both the presentation and articles will remain the same.



COOPERATION, A PRACTICE OF LIBERTY

The notion of cooperation abounds in both marvellous episodes depicted in the Exodus account and in the Multiplication of Loaves.



André Gadbois

¹ JASMIN, Danielle,
The Cooperation Council,
Chenelière/McGraw-Hill 1994,
p. 5

² LANSON, André,
Dying for the People,
Cerf 1970, p. 16

After a few years of teaching secondary pupils who had learning and adjustment disorders, I discovered a book *The Cooperation Council* which helped my two groups of students gradually become more effective in taking part in decision making. They learned to *analyze situations, to understand, to foresee, to plan, to decide, to organize, to bring solutions and evaluate*.¹ Each one took his/her own place with his/her own strength and weaknesses while taking into consideration the group which also had its own way of functioning. Both the individual and the group were important; one could not be sacrificed without affecting the other. I became one of them and they became one WITH me. I must admit, it was not an easy task to structure the social relations of each group which had to be based on equality, responsibility, sharing and a common denominator. I first started by being attentive to each person's particular characteristics which became interesting and important elements for the entire group. The author André Lanson

wrote: *Equality is not a starting point but a goal to achieve; it is therefore an art that is imperative to men.*²

True cooperation is a long process which begins in the individual conscience. To this effect God speaks to us in both Testaments. *If you satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness.* Isaiah vehemently cries out this message to us (Isa 58:6.11) and Jesus endorses it in the synagogue (Lk 4:16.19).

MANNA AND ITS LESSONS

Natural law determines the fundamental rights and duties of every person; however, domination, vengeance, possession, and individualism often blur the human conscience. Rising above natural law to reach the level of cooperation through solidarity and fraternity is an immense challenge. It demands observation, planning together, creating solutions, sharing the work and the results, accompanying, being attentive and sensitive to the other, in addition to evaluating and correcting what

does not work, etc. The story of the Exodus illustrates this clearly as well as does the life of Jesus. To a people in bondage, God had promised a land of 'milk and honey' which they searched for during forty years in the desert. Unconsciously, these people were initiated to live cooperatively in order to overcome fatigue that causes frustration and stress, thirst that leads to quarrels and fights, disappointment caused by a promise that never seemed to come true. As they gathered the manna they learned not to hoard but to take only a necessary portion. They learned to share it with the pregnant women, the handicap, and the elderly who were not always physically able to bend. As they faced obstacles they had to analyze the situation, find new solutions, plan and celebrate their identity and their God. Unfortunately, the COOPERATION LAW which had transformed a people into a free nation gradually deteriorated once they settled in the Promised Land. Prophets came but were ridiculed and turned down. The Palestinian society became like the others, a decimated nation. The God of tenderness was replaced by the god of silver and fraternal life was dissolved. To leave bondage behind is one thing, but it is quite another to live in freedom with others.

A CALL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIENCE

Centuries later, among this enslaved people living in a Palestine subjected to the roman emperor, a prophet came and was introduced by his cousin John the baptizer. This prophet imbued of the Scriptures was called Jesus the carpenter. On a Sabbath day he went to the synagogue of his village and began to read the well-known chapter of the prophet Isaiah (Lk 4:16.22). He applied the passage to himself. Many of Jesus' compatriots followed him as long as He would fascinate them by the deeds he did for them. One day, he surprised his twelve companions by rejecting their solution to feed a crowd of hungry people (let us think of the manna in the desert). Instead, he helped them to reorganize their thoughts. He

invited them to set up a long-term organization presaging the future, to search and to find solutions, to discover each one's value and to share: *You say that a boy has five loaves and two fish... Have the people sit in small groups... You give them something to eat* (Mk 6:34.44). Oups! The twelve and the crowd who were looking for a leader were not familiar with this kind of behavior. This was so different from the usual: wait, follow, accumulate for your own self, store up a reserve, regret the past,

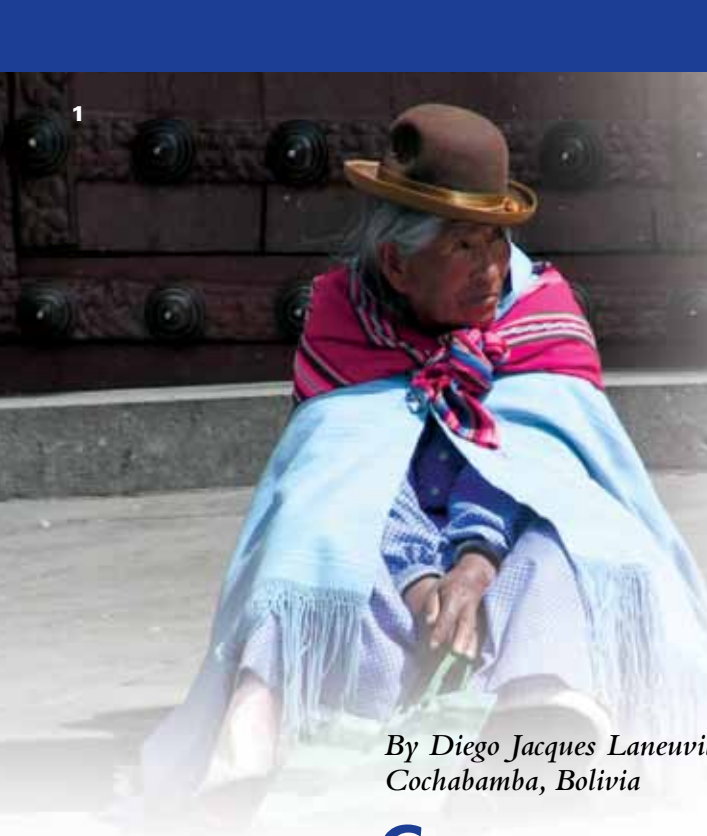
True cooperation is a long process which begins in the individual conscience.



and play the victim. When life becomes a patient development of conscience many leave the caravan, they quit. Jesus' concern for social justice was indisputable and he spoke strongly on human relations (Mt 25:31.46). The crowds followed the prophet Jesus, authorities negatively questioned the origin of his teachings (Mk 3) and in the end he was rejected. But he did not abandon his discourse: before dying, he broke the bread, he shared it with his twelve apostles who became eleven and he said: *This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me* (Lk 22:19). This breaking of the bread would be a sign of 'giving to be near' and so it was for the two disciples. On their way back to Emmaus, Jesus joined them and spoke with them but they did not recognize the Master until he broke the bread in their presence on Easter night. The breaking of the bread was the distinctive sign of the first Christian communities.

Jesus' desire was to reconstruct the trampled human fraternity and he focused on the development of conscience, one at a time, patiently, discreetly. People who truly work cooperatively or apply in their daily living the basics of cooperation are actually erecting a fraternal world which bears the name of Humanity. One day this world will be recognized and celebrated. ~





COPOSA HEALTHCARE FOR THE POOR

*By Diego Jacques Laneuville,
Cochabamba, Bolivia*



COPOSA, meaning a public health cooperative, is located in Llallagua, a poor city (3,800 meters altitude) in the mountainous region of North Potosi, southwest of Bolivia. Llallagua is situated between two giant mining encampments, SigloXX and Catavi. This largest mining enterprise of Bolivia is owned by COMIBOL (Bolivian Mining Corporation) and it regroups numerous state owned mines. At one time 15,000 of the 25,000 inhabitants of Llallagua depended directly on the tin mines of Catavi. In this mining region, COMIBOL had a large hospital with many specialized departments, but it was exclusively for the permanent mine workers dispersed throughout the country.

The population of Llallagua included 1,500 independent mine workers; they had to sell their production to COMIBOL. Unfortunately, this population had no right to receive any kind of services from the COMIBOL hospital and neither did the thousands of natives who lived in surrounding small villages.

Preoccupied by the poor and the abandoned who could receive no health care, two Church groups decided to promote the COPOSA project: the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who were in charge of the parish at Llallagua and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC). Together with the participation of

many lay people the two groups moved forward with the idea and helped COPOSA to become a reality. The parish already had a dispensary but it was not sufficient to meet the needs of the people, besides it was impossible to ensure its continuity on a long term basis. As of 1965 an MIC nurse, Sister Marcelle St-Arnaud assumed the management of the facility. The MIC doctor, Sister Suzanne Labelle came every Saturday until 1967 when she left for Chile to further her studies.

In February of 1967, with the support of the Oblate Fathers in Llallagua, a Popular Health Committee was organized under the leadership of lay people. Later, it became a Cooperative called COPOSA. In June of that same year, the Oblates donated the furniture and medical supplies of their dispensary which was transformed into what we called the "COPOSA Health Center". Sister Marcelle gave her professional support and later, another nurse, Colette Thériault came to give a helping hand.

From the outset, COPOSA, the very first health care cooperative in the country, focused on the formation of its members. Sessions on the principles of cooperatives, health prevention programs, and vaccination campaigns were on the agenda. In 1971, I came back to Llallagua as a volunteer abroad with SUCO/CUSO

(Canadian University Service Overseas). At first, I was involved in promoting and training the cooperative's directors; later I took charge of the hospital's administration. COPOSA operated with the monthly contributions from the affiliates and the modest sums which patients paid for the care they received.

Considering that the COMIBOL hospital dealt only with the permanent miners, the directors of COPOSA decided to build a hospital to better serve the population at large. The first step was to acquire a piece of land (2,000m²) from COMIBOL. Our request was more than welcome because this multi-mineral corporation often had to deal with patients who were not members of the mining centers. Administration-wise this caused them many problems. Therefore, they agreed to give us the land, plus the construction materials for the future hospital; OXFAM Canada also offered a donation. The Llallagua population provided the workforce and fabricated by hand the adobe bricks (sun-baked mud mixed with hay). Thus, between 1969 and 1971 a new hospital measuring 1,200m² was gradually built.

In 1970 the directors decided to open the out-patient clinic in that section of the hospital provided for that purpose; then they completed the medical wards and furnished the equipment. Even though the hospital wards were not yet completed, the 1,500 independent miners enrolled as members of COPOSA. This was quite a challenge because overnight COPOSA went from 200 membership families to more than 1,700 families. But the goal was to serve the population and the team accepted this challenge.

In March 1971, Genoveva Ballester, a pharmaceutical technician, was incorporated to organize the pharmacy and mount the laboratory. In April, Sister Suzanne Labelle returned to Llallagua, specialized in general surgery. She assumed the direction of the hospital. In the meantime, Sister Marcelle had returned to Canada and contacted international aid



organizations to obtain complete medical equipment for the hospital. In 1972, the hospital was fully operational with 36 beds; there were medical offices, emergency rooms, treatment quarters, operation and delivery rooms plus incubators. The pharmacy, the laboratory, the X-ray departments were all well equipped as well as the kitchen, the laundry, and all other administrative services.

The vast population which had been ignored in the past and deprived from health care services was now the happy beneficiary of this hospital. The MIC Sisters supported COPOSA until the year 1976; then, they handed over the complete running of the hospital to a competent Bolivian personnel. They also had collaborated in training the well known "médecins en sandales" (barefoot doctors) for the surrounding villages.

The MIC Sisters and the Oblate Fathers together with the support of Llallagua laity and SUCO/CUSO actualized the message of Jesus who came to *save the poor and release the oppressed* (Lk 4:18).

EPILOGUE: In the '70s the directors of the hospital knew very well that health care services were the State's obligation and that sooner or later it would step up and take over. However, it was not until 2009 that the State assumed responsibility of the COPOSA Hospital. ∞

¹ Photo Credit: Stock.XCHNG

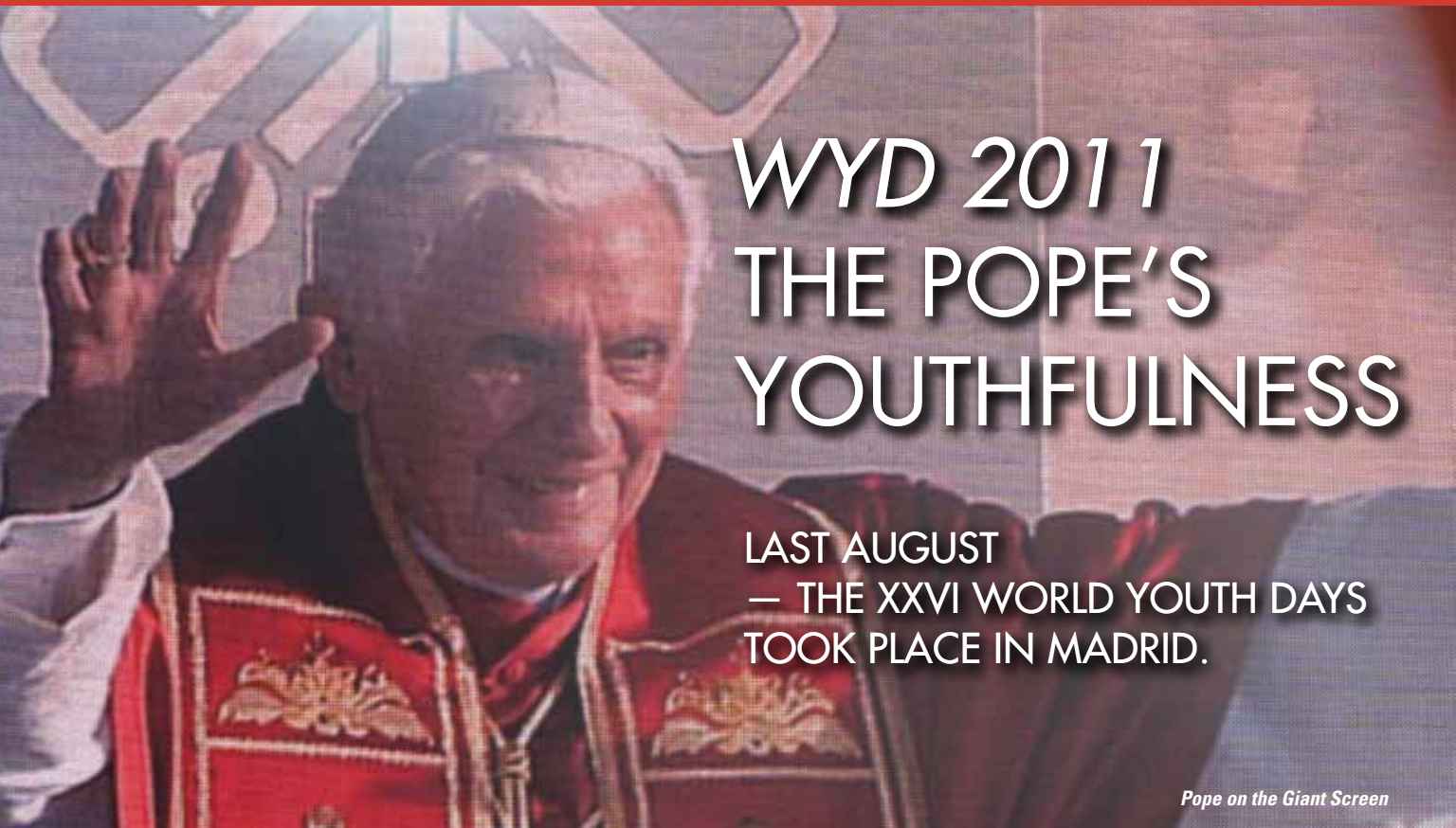
² Potosi

Photo Credit: Vicky Vega

³ The first three nurses

Photo Credit: S. Labelle, M.I.C.





WYD 2011 THE POPE'S YOUTHFULNESS

LAST AUGUST
— THE XXVI WORLD YOUTH DAYS
TOOK PLACE IN MADRID.

Pope on the Giant Screen

By Véronique Martel

The World Youth Days (WYD) are a great opportunity for the Christian youth from around the world to meet the Pope and to celebrate their faith together. The activities are not only for Catholics but for all young people who wish to live an unforgettable experience of prayer and sharing. From August 16 to August 21, two million young adults from two hundred countries came together to live this experience in Madrid, Spain.

PREPARATION

Such an event demands a rigorous preparation. Upon their arrival the participants were guided to different homes either in Madrid or in surrounding areas; others took shelter in community halls, school gymnasiums converted into dorms for the occasion. During their stay in Spain they were welcomed and accompanied by the organizers of the event. However, for the participants, their preparation for WYD was more than having to decide what they would put in their suitcases. From the 11th to the 15th of August 2011,

they were invited to pray, meditate and listen to the Pope's messages which were available on line via videos.

A WHOLE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

On August 16 the inaugural mass, presided over by the Archbishop of Madrid, was celebrated at Plaza Cibeles, opposite Madrid town hall. World Youth Days were further highlighted with the opening of the *Youth Festival*. Concerts, exhibitions, theatrical presentations, guided tours to museums, were part and parcel of the program to enchant the festival-goers. Though these activities were complementary to the WYD events, they did not perturb the religious ceremonies because they were held before and after the Eucharistic celebrations and catechesis sessions. Besides the meetings with Pope Benedict XVI and the events of the *Youth Festival* the young people could come together on other occasions. For example, they had the opportunity of walking the Way of the Cross, and of viewing statues which came from all over Spain and were



from traditional Holy Week celebrations. They could also take part in Eucharistic adoration and in preparing liturgies.

Every morning the participants attended catechesis sessions given by bishops from all over the world. Particularly important was August 17—the pilgrims received religious instructions which intensified their preparation for the next day's greatest moment of the WYD. Yes, on August 18, the Pope would be with them in the evening at Cuatro Vientos airdrome. Though the ceremony was scheduled to begin only at 20:30, the young people arrived early in the morning. While waiting for the Pope, music, entertainment, theatrical presentations, film documentaries, and much more were on the day's agenda. Numerous tents were set up to allow the pilgrims to come to pray all night before the Eucharistic presence; adoration took place until dawn.

HEARTS AND VOICES SING

August 20 was a day dedicated to song. Five thousand choristers from all parts of the world gave an impressive concert and this was followed by an overnight prayer vigil. The last day, the 21st, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated the closing Mass with thousands of bishops and priests. In his final speech the Holy Father announced where the next World Youth Day would take place. It will be held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2013. It must be underlined that Brazil has the largest Catholic community in Latin America. For a second time WYD will unfold in South America; in 1987 Buenos Aires in Argentina was the host country.

THE YOUTH—A CATHOLIC HOPE

Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid and President of the WYD organizing committee told the journalists that Pope Benedict XVI was visibly moved with great joy during the World Youth Days. The organizers assessed the event as very positive. Yago de la Cierva, Executive Director of the WYD declared last August 23: *The event*

was a marvel of grace. Madrid has changed, Spain has changed, and above all thousands of young people have drawn close to Jesus Christ, thanks to the Pope's teaching. If I were to highlight something, it would be the very great number of young people who were able to concentrate on the essential, who dedicated time to Eucharistic adoration, went to confession and took part in the events with tangible devotion. This popular world-wide event underscores the growing craving for spiritual renewal. Such a rally nourishes the faith and re-ignites the sense of belonging. Christian joy-filled manifestations are

Such a rally nourishes the faith and re-ignites the sense of belonging.

very rare nowadays, but the world youth testify being motivated by Christ and the Church's Christian values. *The World Youth Days* are a good example of the fervor and determination of the twenty-first century's Catholic youth. ☪

Photos Credit:

La Famille des Puits de Lumière



ARE YOU ZEN?

To be ZEN is a pretty sophisticated expression, don't you think? Are you ZEN? – Yes, you might say, *I have those kinds of perfumes, oils, incense, soaps. I light candles to help me relax. I am ZEN!* – No! Not yet! – Ah! Yes... *I eat ZEN, and I take care of my health in a ZEN way: bio foods, natural medicines, I listen to ZEN music... yes, all that!* – Well, the most important thing is missing.

By Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

SO SMALL, SO SWEET

Look at these little ones! Both are truly ZEN—*completely focused on the present moment*. ZEN is not a practice apart from our daily activities. To sit and meditate, to create a calm atmosphere, to relax the ZEN way is good. But the most important is to know HOW TO BECOME ZEN in our everyday life, to be *completely attentive to what we are doing, to live every moment to the fullest* while at the same time *being free and serene*.

In a world that has lost its way spiritually, morally, socially and family-wise, what should we teach our children? Mothers, fathers, grand-parents, do you not sometimes ask yourself those questions with some kind of anxiety? Do not panic, come along and be ZEN!

Students of Xaviero School,
Aizu-Wakamatsu, Japan
Photo Credit:
M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



IT ALL BEGINS WITH ONE STEP

A Japanese proverb states: *Even a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step*. And the first steps we take in our life are they not at the stage of infancy? This goes to prove the importance of education. In Japan, few people give time to long meditations, but life is colored by Buddhism. In the temple, even the Great Master shares the daily tasks because the *extraordinary is found in the depth of the ordinary*. To be ZEN is to sit in silence and afterwards to be focused on the action performed. The Japanese know that only by working together centered/focused, will they be able to achieve their goals.

At the end of a day, take a look at what goes on in a primary or secondary Japanese school. You will discover an ants' nest—all the students are busy cleaning the classrooms, the washrooms, the hallways. Each one is responsible and it works.

Walk the streets on a Sunday morning round about six o'clock. You will also find here adults, women and men, wearing gloves and having in hand a rake, a broom, sweeping the streets, beautifying their neighborhood. That is the ZEN spirit. The departure point: *develop the habit as early as the childhood years*.

I have given you an example, now all you need to do is to TRY IT! If you wish to counter the individualistic attitude and build a better and more beautiful world, then begin to take a first step with your young children. Be ZEN! Yes, truly ZEN! ☺

DARE TO ACT!

A RADICAL OPTIMIST BRINGS HOPE



When a person has insight, initiative, a generous caring heart and does not fear bending low to raise up the poor, then beautiful things begin to happen.

By Edita Telan, M.I.C.

In our present world we see both dramatic positive and negative sides of our lives brought about by a phenomenon called globalization. It has virtues and a seamy side. It brings about benefits as well as detriments to the wholistic development of humanity today. While globalization seems to tie or bind us all together and seemingly tearing down barriers to unity, we cannot ignore the widening gap between the rich and the poor. For instance, the Philippines, a country blessed with many natural

resources, populated with a great majority of Catholics is unfortunately counted as one of the world's poorest countries. Right in the metropolis city of Manila, a mangled city, where underneath there is a tangled web of greed and utter disregard for human life or decency. Manila is riddled with villages of shanties inhabited by informal settlers, called squatters who come from the countryside, hoping to improve their lives. This is in contrast to the luxurious mansions in exclusive villages with an elite culture.

Tony Meloto, Founder of
the Gawad Kalinga
Photo Credit:
World Mission Magazine,
Ric M. Gindap, Art & Design



BEFORE



A sensitive Catholic Christian, seeing this contrast could easily fall into despair, wondering if his country could still free itself from this web of poverty. Thankfully there is an optimist who sees a silver lining in the sky. This is no other than **Tony Meloto** who brings hope to the hopeless, not only to his countrymen but to other unfortunate people worldwide.

GENESIS OF A HOUSING PROJECT: GAWAD KALINGA (CARING FOR OTHERS)

Tony graduated in economics and went into marketing with an international company. At the age of 35, he with his family joined Couples for Christ (CFC). It was during this involvement that he started out on his faith journey. He became aware that religion and citizenship are not lived in ways that honor God by many of his compatriots. At this time he perceived poverty and corruption from a spiritual and economic perspective and thus he began his search for a deeper and more meaningful expression of his faith. He left his lucrative job to dedicate himself to the ministries of CFC. He realized then that loving the poor is divine love, that Christianity was not just about him and his family, but also about the larger community.

He decided to leave behind a privileged life and dedicate his time and strength to empower the poor. He began working among the informal settlers in the biggest slum called Bagong Silang in 1995. This was then the country's "biggest

university of criminals" as Tony puts it. He began with a youth program attracting 127 youths by means of food and music. He put up a center to train the young people on how to make a livelihood, he created theatrical and musical programs and sent some gang leaders back to school.

SOCIAL ENGINEERING AND A 'BUILD' PHILOSOPHY

Soon he realized that transforming the men in the slums should be given priority. He introduced social engineering with the aim of transforming their homes and their physical environment. The 'build' philosophy is not only to construct houses but aims at building the community, a faith community where there's respect and where people have dignity and security. However, building houses in an area requires the initiators and cooperators. The so-called squatters provided the labor while some generous people provided the land and building materials. The CFC members provided management.

THREE PHASES OF GK

Gawad Kalinga was officially launched in 2000 and has become a global enterprise since 2003. It has extended its beneficiaries to the poor in Cambodia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Support has been received from the people of the United States, Canada and Australia. This humanitarian project encompasses three phases.

In the Philippines: Phase I (2003-2010)—These were years of social justice. Landowners shared their land with the



AFTER

poor to build GK houses. Peace and order were achieved which propelled economic activities; the benefactors benefitted from sharing because their remaining land in the area increased in value. The government started a program called land banking. It is a public service which also benefits the government officials. Thus in this 7-year period of GK, officially known as *Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation*, more than a million families own their houses and land where they cannot be evicted like squatters.

Phase II (2010-2017)—This second phase is called social activity and social entrepreneurship which sustains the families, and it teaches them not to depend on the philanthropy and charity of others.

Phase III (2017-2024)—The third phase looks towards social progress when GK collaborates in the social entrepreneurship field in partnership with the economic team of the government as well as universities even abroad. This phase will also foresee the building of the country's own village universities and encourage the graduates to go to the communities and create wealth for those who are at the bottom of the economic pyramid. So far Gawad Kalinga has built around 200,000 houses and established 2,000 communities for the poor that is setting a nation-building style of which every Filipino dreams.

COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE

In 2005, former students from ICAM (Immaculate Conception Academy of Manila) decided to sponsor twenty-

four home units at Barangay Namayan, Castaneda, in the city of Mandaluyong. Funds came from the GK core group, friends and relatives. They got involved in long-term community sustainability. Youth leadership training tapped potential community youth leaders who participated in community building. The project closest to their hearts is the Délia Tétreault Activity Center which serves as a pre-school and day-care center for the families of the community.

From the very beginning many MIC Sisters have been involved in catechesis and promoting a wholesome education for the youth; the parents of the children also attend Evangelization seminars. In 2008, Mr. Tony Meloto, Founder of GK, with the alumnae from ICA (Immaculate Conception Academy) and the Sisters organized the Chain Rosary for all kids around the world. At the Délia Tétreault Learning Center in Castaneda, Mandaluyong, children from 3 to 5 years of age benefit from the activities that help them grow physically, spiritually and intellectually. Everyone is involved, young and old alike; such a grand scale humanitarian project is a gift for our country.

Hopefully with God's abundant blessings upon our Islands we shall *"harvest a country without poverty by 2024"* and consequently there will be no more inequality, no more violence and no more moral decay in the Philippines. This is the goal of Gawad Kalinga's founder and we support him wholeheartedly. 🌸

TO FIND OUT MORE:

REBELO, Fr. José Antonio, MCCJ,
I am a radical optimist,
World Mission Magazine,
July 2011: 26-33

SAY, CAN YOU PLANT CABBAGES?



2012 is the International Year of Cooperatives. How can I integrate my New Year's resolutions with the values promoted by this movement?



Véronique Martel

It's already 2012. This New Year could resemble previous years; however, I hope that it will bring some changes and that there will be an evolution in thinking and acting. This obliges me to reconsider my own choices and decisions. If I wish a change to take place and before demanding it of others I must first of all be the driving force behind it.

Thus my resolution for the coming year is to become more open, lenient, tolerant, and respectful of my neighbor, but I am not sure this will be sufficient. It seems to me I could and should be more committed to my community. The older I get the more conscious I become of being part and parcel of this planet earth, also that I am one among many others in a society and that I am not alone in the world. I also realize that my individual choices have an impact: we must recycle and reduce pollution in the atmosphere.

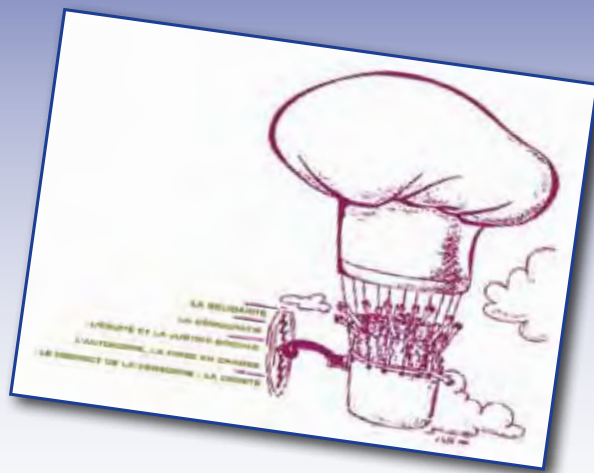
We all have heard and most have understood the message. But we must know that recycling and consuming local and organic food are not financially feasible for all. To be honest, most of us cannot weekly pay double or triple the usual price to purchase food products that have been ethically, ecologically grown. With a limited budget how can I combine my social and environmental preoccupations? My mother, like many other mothers who often offer good advice, told me about community gardens and collective kitchens. She was not sure how these first started; she thought it was a movement initiated by the hippies. At first, I didn't pay much attention to this but as I spoke with my colleagues at the university, I realized that this previously unknown phenomena to me—community gardens and collective kitchens—were the solution I was looking for.

GARDENS OF EDEN

In Montreal, there are close to one hundred community gardens. Since 1975 the city has given the land, the water, a shed, gardening tools, tables, fences, sand, paint, flowers and a specialized horticulturist who advises the inexperienced gardeners. The control and management of each garden is administered by a committee of volunteers elected by the participants. This system offers city dwellers a unique contact with nature and with neighbors. It is a great opportunity for Montrealers to cultivate their own fruits and vegetables organically; no chemicals are used.

There is diversity in the types of community gardens. In the city of Beauharnois, a municipality of southwestern Quebec, members of the community gardens do not own individual plots. The land is cultivated at large by everyone and their commitment goes beyond team work; many become friends and share not only recipes but also their vegetarian dishes.

The idea of community gardens is not unique to this metropolitan area. *The Garden Workshops* located in Beauport, Quebec is a good example. The project was initiated round about 1990 and allows the inhabitants of the Quebec region to cultivate their own food products. The majority of the participants are young families and persons who live below the poverty line. With the help of agriculturists they acquire knowledge and competence in the manual labor required; they discover a national heritage which our ancestors have left us. Quebecers have long been defined as an agricultural people. Besides the educational impact, community gardens create a collective dynamic and a spirit of cooperation because all the decisions are taken by the group and involve the group.



HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO, THROUGH HARD LABOR, CAN BE NOURISHED BY THEIR OWN GROWN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Since food products are cultivated by the group, it is logical that they also be cooked by the group. This brings me to talk about collective kitchens. It is here that people experience solidarity, democracy, equity and respect. Participants share the planning, the cost and preparation of healthy meals. Each month, the cooks come together to choose the menu which they will cook in bulk at their next meeting. A grocery list is made and each participant is responsible of buying the necessary ingredients. When the date is set for the cooking, all the members take part in preparing the recipes. Enough food is made so that each one can bring home a one month supply.

Some groups function differently depending on human needs. Young families can come together more often to cook a variety of menus. Vegetarians can cook without meat. Students learn the basics in cooking and can enjoy the results of their first dish.

Community gardens and collective kitchens are places where the environment and human beings are respected. Cooperation and commitment are, in this case, synonymous with respect and democracy. As I participate in this kind of community project I can help others financially and socially while also taking care of myself. ∞

^{1,2} Collective Kitchens

Photos Credit: Communautique

TO FIND OUT MORE:

Community Gardens in Quebec:

www.rjcq.ca

Collective Kitchens in Quebec:

www.rccq.org

REACHING-OUT EVEN THOUGH THE SUN SETS



Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

After a long day of work, have you ever been re-energized by a stunning sunset? Taking time to watch the sun as it meets the horizon, to admire its breathtaking colors, and to savor the visual magic of such precious moments leads the soul to a tranquil state—the aches, the stress, the thoughts of the day seem to disappear—at least for the moment.

‘Sun sets’ – can this natural phenomenon be seen another way? Can it be seen symbolically? Gradually our society has seen a change in its population; a group of people, the so called elderly, has risen to unprecedented levels. How many times we hear the expressions: “getting old”, “an ageing society”, “an ageing personnel”, “an ageing Church and clergy”. Such expressions do not generate much enthusiasm, nor call forth life-giving dynamism.

Perhaps we could change our perception? What if we talked about the elderly in terms of the sun? Yes, consider the sun as it sets in all its fiery colors—could we not envision our elderly as such? Their many years have colored their life tapestry

with awesome radiance. Being attentive to them we discover a fact which perhaps we have been ignoring. These are the persons who, in their unique ways, worked hand-in-hand to build the future. Are our elderly simply old? No! Author, Benoit Lacroix once wrote: *Ageing is a climb to the summit by ways that differ for each one. The person who walks and climbs can see the infinite horizon and can gaze into infinity. The higher the altitude, the greater the clarity.*¹

COOPERATION HAS NO AGE

Many of the elderly are so profound, have such a high-spirited mind and a fervent heart that, without their know-

ing, they have the power to transform their milieu. They are a rallying point, a reaching-out at cross-roads; they emanate a radiance that attracts others.

An example: Mrs. Madeleine lived in a retirement home for the last few years of her life. Gifted in many ways, she often consoled and advised others with her gentle, compassionate words. Her nimble fingers were put to use in arts and crafts, teaching and motivating residents who needed distractions. Her workshop was opened to everyone: learning to make pearl necklaces and bracelets attracted many residents; these were great gifts for their grand children. With beads, they created Christmas ornaments such as stars and bells for the children to hang on the holiday tree. Over two hundred beaded rosaries were put together and were freely given to whoever wanted one adding a prayer for the families and friends. Madeleine knew how to instill a spirit of joy: she decorated hallways and rooms to highlight certain celebrations; posters and a center piece on all the tables was the special touch which added a spark to the feasts.

Besides her artistic talents, Madeleine excelled in another area. Aware of the solitude or loneliness that some residents felt every now and then, she came to them with a listening heart and a comforting word. The splendor of a bright sunset was within her soul and she shared it with those in need. A sunset appears every evening; we wait for it because we know it will come. The residents knew Madeleine was there and her availability was deeply appreciated. They knew her door was always wide open to them.

COOPERATION GIVES MEANING TO LIFE

A strong point which constitutes the make-up of retirement residences is the cooperation between those who are bearers of hope and those who are the recipients. It is a chain-link of friendships which ensures the well-being of each

one. The greetings, the welcoming smiles, the friendly handshakes, the encouraging words, the helping hand, plus the Lord Jesus who comes in the Holy Communion are all actions that enrich the lives of both the givers and the receivers. Cooperation is most valuable; indeed, its essence lies in sharing and receiving.

We are invited to recognize the inspiring colorful tapestries of our elderly. Admiring them at their sunset stage we can say with Benoit Lacroix: *Your dedication wove our existence into being who we are; you are the roots of the tree, the source of the brook. You are a living witness, the link of yester-years. You worked and suffered; may you be blessed for having loved, for having helped all those to whom you have given your life.*²

THE OTHER SIDE/THE OTHER SHORE

Let us take a closer look at the 'sun sets'—both the sun of Mother Nature and the sun of our many social centers for the elderly. Do these suns really set or disappear? When nature's sun descends in its colorful splendor behind the horizon, is it not rising somewhere on the other side? The sun never sets!

Is this not the symbol of the New Life that is awaiting our elderly on the Other Shore when their physical life begins its slow descent to the other side of this world? Yes, this is truly the symbol of a New Life in the Risen Christ who invites us to His eternal banquet: *You lead me beside quiet waters, you restore my soul. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for you are with me. You prepare a table before me... I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever* (Ps. 23).

To you precious and irreplaceable elderly, a heartfelt THANK YOU! 🌸

¹ LACROIX, Benoit, *Célébration des âges et des saisons*, p. 72

² (*Ibid.* p. 74)

PHOTO

Marguerite Picard and
Dolorès St-Cyr, M.I.C.

Photomontage:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

LETTERS FROM...

PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAÏTI)

All has arrived safely! The three containers were unloaded without a hitch. Chairs, desks, tables, beds, tools, electrical appliances, even doors will help refurbish the Mother Délia's Institute and the MIC house which were destroyed in the 2010 earthquake. Thanks to CECI (Center for International Studies and Cooperation) who decided to pay for the shipment of two containers, the Haitian people and the MIC Sisters of the area were able to resume classes earlier than foreseen. The Sisters of the house of Joliette, QC together with the personnel of CECI were able to make this project come true—it was cooperation at its very best! The recipients at the other end were ecstatic upon seeing the shipment arrive at their door and with gratitude the Provincial Superior, Sr. Josette Augustin wrote the following:

Our Foundress, the Venerable Délia Tétreault used to say: "Let gratitude fill your hearts to overflowing." As a worthy daughter of Délia, I take this wonderful opportunity to express to you my deep gratitude for your generous gift to the Province of Haiti.

Since the earthquake, you have not ceased to support us with your prayers and your financial assistance. Today, your great generosity is expressed by your eagerness to give us the furniture that was at the house of Joliette. I am a witness to the energy you have spent carrying out this move, in spite of your age and the fatigue accumulated over many years of mission.

My special congratulations to the last tenants of the house of Joliette! Knowing that the furniture was going to Haiti was a great relief to each one of you. What a wonderful gesture of solidarity! Therefore, in my name and in that of all the M.I.C. of Port-au-Prince, a million thanks to each one of you. We carried some of the doors our Foundress once touched; it was an amazing experience and also quite symbolic. In a certain way, the house of Joliette will be reborn in Haiti.

Your attention and your encouraging words convey your joy of sharing... May the God of Life repay you a hundredfold!

*With all my affection and gratitude,
Josette Augustin, M.I.C.
Provincial Superior*



Sr. Josette Augustin



Sr. Lucette Gilbert

... HAITI!

PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAÏTI)

After many years of service in Canada, Sr. Cécile Ménard writes us from Haiti.

I have safely arrived in Haiti and was welcomed wholeheartedly. Without any trouble my luggage went through customs. At 3 p.m. when I arrived at Delmas, two big containers from Joliette were in the courtyard being unloaded and transferred to a Toyota truck destined for Mother Délia's Institute. After a short coffee break, Sr. Josette asked me: Would you come with me to unload the truck and bring the furniture to our new school? It was a monstrous task to which I participated joyfully.

Sr. Josette gave the instructions to a team of men: mattresses here, desks in those classes, beds in the future infirmary for the sick students, etc. It had to be done quickly because the rain was coming and so was dusk. Finally, it was over! The men waited for their meager payment before leaving. I took a few photos as proof, and for the sake of remembrance.

At 7 p.m., we came back for supper and within the next few days work resumed. All the things that had been stored away and placed in boxes had to be moved because space was needed. In the yard a tent is still mounted for unexpected visitors or sometimes for Father Romet who comes from far to say Mass every now and then.

I must say that even though we lack water, electricity and do not have the internet, we cannot complain because in the area of Delmas people still suffer from the basic necessities. What impresses me the most is the patience and serenity of the Sisters. They truly transmit the attitudes of the Gospel.

Your kind words and many prayers have supported me greatly; I have felt the joy of being once again in the country which I had left in 1993. As it was back then, the noise, the odor and the roosters are still my alarm clock for the 6 a.m. Mass—no need to worry about oversleeping. I must end this letter for other duties but Sr. Josette who is by my side tells me not to forget to once again thank you all in the Canadian Province for the generous aid sent to the Haitian Province. Amen!

Sr. Cécile Ménard, M.I.C.



Sr. Cécile Ménard



Photos Credit: MIC

A MISSIONARY TURN-OUT

When speaking about co-operation, we can sometimes note that opening up to the world's poorest populations begins with small steps taken by convinced individuals who transmit their convictions to the next generation. As they went about telling their mission stories with great enthusiasm, Sisters Thérèse Chabot and Marie Leclair captured the attention of a parish community. Sr. Thérèse relates the event.



Maïna – 9 years old,
Leïla – 8 years old

Photo Credit: J.-M. Brisebois

By Thérèse Chabot, M.I.C.

It is said that just as the wave cannot exist for itself but must always participate in the swell of the ocean, so we can never experience life by ourselves but must always share the experience of life that takes place all around us. Today's young generation reflects this quote as it is not indifferent to the fate of others and feels it must share its wealth and happiness. Inspired by what they see and hear, the Christian values that are implemented and passed on from generation to generation all have an impact on the heart of the youngsters.

The other day I was most surprised to receive echoes from people who had heard my homily at Chute-St-Philippe Parish in the Mont-Laurier Diocese. Because few children attend Mass on Sunday, I usually give them much attention when they are present. Are they not the ones that Jesus loved in a very special way? I like to tell them that they represent all the children of their age group. When they come closer, I offer them my best. On that Sunday, I gave two rosaries to two young boys. Upon seeing this, the grandfather said: *I also have two grand-daughters Maïna and Leïla who would have loved to come to Church this morning but they were unable because they had an activity to which they had volunteered and could not get out of their commitment.* I could not resist the request, so I gave the grandfather two rosaries for the girls.

Their joy was so great that they wanted to express their gratitude. They sent me a CD which they were promoting as a fund-raiser for the children in Haiti. As they are both interested in religion and geography they took a subscription to our magazine *MIC Mission News (Le Précurseur)*. Where did they get the money to pay for the subscription? From their own limited allowances! Maïna and Leïla have thus become our two youngest subscribers. They are the first in a troop of young readers. Who knows, perhaps their example will lead others to cooperate as they did and to promote the missionary press as a way of evangelizing and reaching out. ☺

ACPC – AWARD WINNER – 2011

In the "Chronicle" category, the ACPC Jury presented an award to Mr. André Gadbois for his articles which appeared in the following three issues of the MIC Mission News:

Winter 2010: *Carving a Living Sculpture*

Winter 2011: *Condemned to Decay in the Sun*

Spring 2011: *Only One Well Is Eternal*

The Jury of the Canadian Association of the Catholic Periodicals (ACPC) specified that the subjects presented by the author reveal pertinent realities expressed originally. Both the content and editing of the articles capture the readers' attention and are conducive to reflection. The Jury expressed that Mr. Gadbois' literary style, text structure and his impeccable French are of great merit.

André, we congratulate you!

The Editorial Team

and Personnel of the MIC Missionary Press

André with Danielle Vaillancourt, ACPC Representative



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Dawn Of A New Life

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



Luisa A. Tan, M.I.C.
(*Sr. Luisa-Teresita*)
1939-2011
Davao City, Philippines

A woman of faith with a gentle heart, Sr. Luisa had a perturbed childhood caused by the death of her young mother and her being adopted at the age of five. At nine she was sent to Davao to study Chinese. Though her foster parents did not agree with her decision, Luisa pursued her studies and graduated with a Master's degree in sociology. In 1963, she entered the MIC Novitiate in Baguio. Sr. Luisa worked in Taiwan and Hong-Kong where she assumed a variety of ministries. In 1990 she studied linguistics after which she was sent to China as an English teacher. When illness took over, her former students visited her and remembered her as someone who was a cheerful giver with a ready smile.



Jeanne Jetté, M.I.C.
(*Sr. Pierre-de-Galilée*)
1914-2011
Montreal, QC

One day, Jeanne heard a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception speak about her work with the lepers at the Shek Lung Colony in China. Impressed, she nourished in her heart the desire to become a missionary. At twenty-three, she entered the MIC Novitiate at Pont-Viau. She studied to become a radiologist technician and was then mandated to go to Haiti where she worked at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital of Deschapelles. In 1970, upon her return to Canada, she diligently set up the Dewey classification system for the thousands of books in our two largest libraries. Sister left us on the Feast of the Holy Rosary. May her devoted life be crowned by the Virgin Mary.



Jacqueline Michaud, M.I.C.
(*Sr. Saint-Fabien*)
1928-2011
Yamaska, QC

Though petite and frail, Jacqueline was energetic. At a very young age she wanted to become a contemplative but she later decided to follow her sister's footsteps. At nineteen, she entered the MIC Novitiate at Pont-Viau. More than once her wish to serve in mission countries vanished because of her fragile health. Nonetheless, she had the joy of serving four months in Peru where her sibling was stationed. Upon her return she was assigned to various tasks. Sister Jacqueline's kindness, her amiable welcome and sense of humor were characteristics that her companions admired. She will long be remembered for her *life lived under the sun rays of Love* as she wrote in her last journal.



Cécile Pilon, M.I.C.
(*Sr. Marie-Rose*)
1909-2011
Montreal, QC

The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary were Cécile's primary school teachers and what a joy it was when her religious name was that of their Foundress, Sr Marie-Rose.

In 1929, Cécile entered our Institute and had the privilege of knowing Mother Délia Tétreault. Simple and amiable, Sr. Cecile's efficiency during her thirty-four years of service in authority was remarkable. Attentive to each one, she reached out and generously gave her time as long as it was needed. In Haiti, she taught the young ones and with enthusiasm prepared them for the sacraments. On November 30, 2011, she was welcomed by Mary and Mother Délia whom she loved dearly. Their Magnificat will resound eternally.

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Awaken Me Lord!

Generous God, you smile upon the wide diversity and beauty in the humanity you have created, but you weep at the great divide between the rich and the poor.

Stretch my vision so that I do not forget those who hunger and search for shelter each day. Touch my compassion so that I know the pain of the hungry, the violated, the homeless, the burdened, and all those who yearn for some of my riches.

I beg to have greater awareness and a deeper commitment to what will heal my world. Help me to make good decisions about my daily living so that who I am and what I do can have a positive effect on my brothers and sisters everywhere on this vast planet.

May I be attentive and alert to how you would have me live my abundant life. Grant me the generosity to share it with others. Amen!

Joyce Rupp

