

MIC

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MISSION NEWS



To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

JAPAN

TO FEAR OR TO
UNDERSTAND

CANADA

SECULARISM

- A TOOL FOR
SOCIAL PEACE?

- A CHANCE FOR
EVANGELIZATION?

IN FOCUS:

**LIVING
TOGETHER
HARMONIOUSLY**



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS - 2012

JULY 2012

WE PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN LAY VOLUNTEERS

*In all mission territories where they
work, may they joyfully be witnesses of
Christ's unconditional love.*

AUGUST 2012

WE PRAY FOR THE YOUTH

*That young people, called to follow
Christ, may be willing to proclaim and
bear witness to the Gospel wherever
they are.*

SEPTEMBER 2012

WE PRAY FOR THE POOREST CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD

*May the poorest Churches receive
concrete help from Christian
communities who willingly send
missionaries, priests and lay volunteers.*

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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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Offices

Missionary Press MIC
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval, QC Canada H7G 1A4

Phone: (450) 663-6460

Fax: (450) 972-1512

E-mail: micmissionnews@pressemic.org

Web site: www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

Directress of Publication

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Carole Guévin, Assistant

Editors

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
André Gadbois

Translation

Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
Robin Dick

In Collaboration

Linda Anderson, PhD
Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

Promotion

Antoinette Castonguay, M.I.C.
Ditma Luz Trocio, M.I.C.
Mary Olga Lam, M.I.C.

Circulation

Michelle Paquette, M.I.C.
Deborah Sunborg

Accounting

Thérèse Déziel, M.I.C.
Germaine Pérusse, M.I.C.

Layout & Design

Caron Communications
graphiques / Millennium
concept & design

Printing

Solisco

Cover

"Women Wisdom Dancing"
Artist: Mary Southard, CSJ
www.MarySouthardArt.Org
Courtesy of
www.Ministryofthearts.org
Congregation of St. Joseph

Editorial Board

Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.
Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.
André Gadbois
Véronique Martel

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EDITORIAL



ENTERING INTO DIALOGUE

Globalization has intensified the pluralistic secular society we are living in; the changes that are taking place give rise to many questions and inner searching. For those who were born at a time when Christian values were honored and instilled, it is difficult for them to live in a space between what was and what is yet to be. The inner-self is shattered and questions abound. The Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodations did not succeed in appeasing anxieties or acquiring unanimity. How do we live together harmoniously? Can secularization bring about a just and egalitarian society? These are the issues our post-Christian society is faced with and there are no simple solutions.

We are at a turning-point. We need to decide which values we want to live by and transmit to future generations. Here in Quebec, most of our cities, towns, villages, streets, are named after saints. This is our heritage, our inheritance. Harmony will only be possible if all recognize the fundamental values of tolerance, equality, brotherhood, sisterhood and accept being co-responsible in the life of the society.

The focus in this issue is on 'secularization' and its implications. Sr. Micheline Laguë helps us come to grips with the notion of secularization — *give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's* (Lk 20:25). Louise Melançon relates that it would be an illusion to consider such a process apart from its historical, social and cultural context. She states that it is not from an abstract reality that this concept arises but from a society's evolution. You will notice the truth of this statement as you read through Sr. Louisa's article — a profile of Japan and France's movement towards secularization. André Gadbois reminds us that Christ wore no distinctive sign; He was in the midst of His people and His actions revealed His identity.

Mme. Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

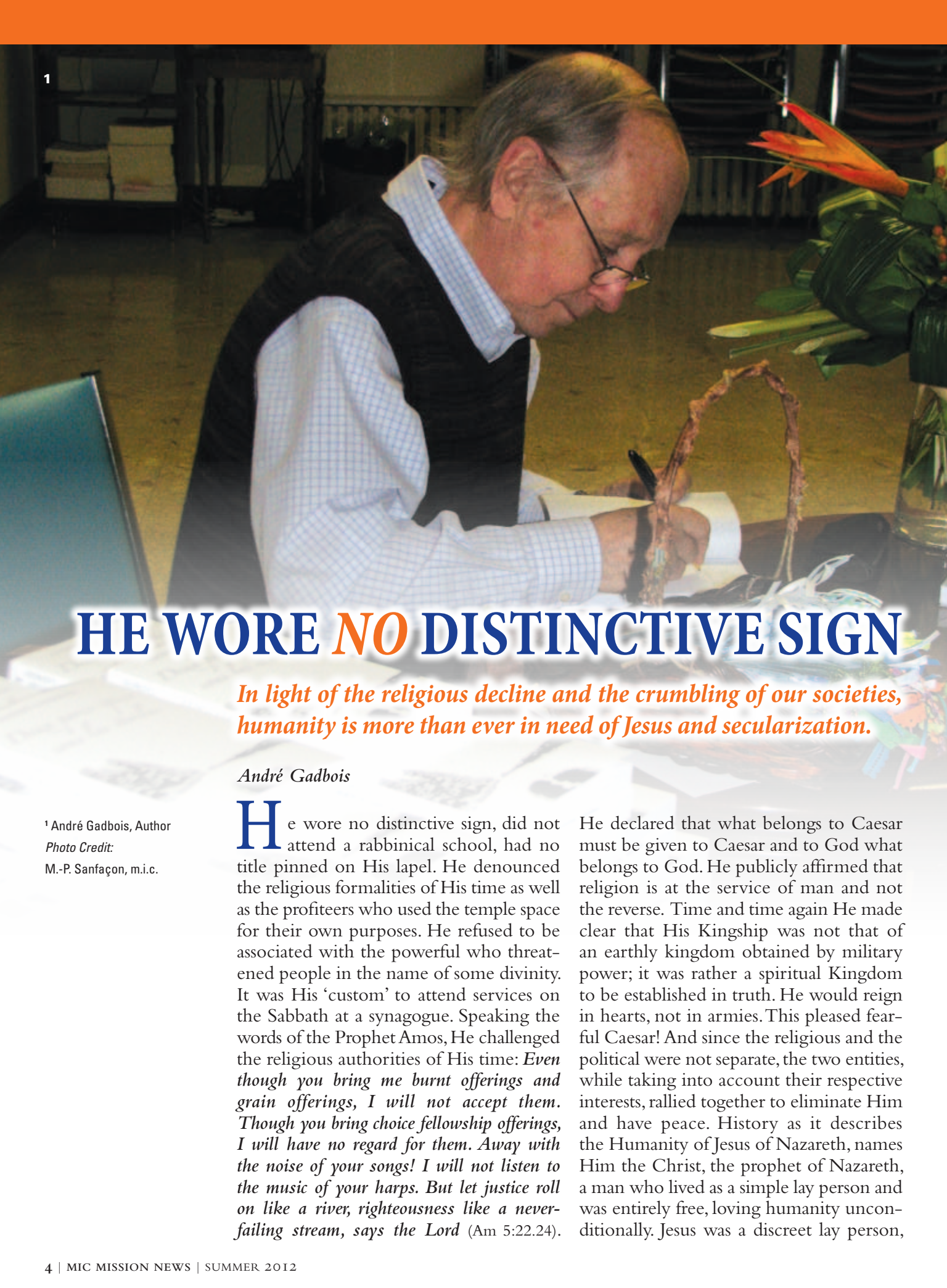
At a time when in Quebec we did not speak about the separation of the Church and the State, Délia Tétreault was preoccupied with God's interests and the happiness of all peoples. She searched for ways to be of service to the Church and to the society. A few excerpts from the letters she wrote to her missionaries in China will convince you.

By way of children we reach an entire population. I would therefore say: to the young boarders, orphaned and day students, spare nothing to offer them a sound Christian formation. Teach them to reason well, to judge wisely, to desire knowledge, to conquer self; meaning to say, in all circumstances live according to faith and reason—reason enlightened by faith. If you would achieve training your students to be devoted and goodwill women, what a great service you would offer to society and to religion. (November 29, 1924)

May the Sisters who are in charge of the orphans' education and of the Holy-Spirit School, apply themselves in understanding the greatness and importance of their holy functions... If the students, upon leaving your house, bring with them a love for prayer, a devotion to Mary, a fear of what appears to be wrongful, and a delicate conscience leading them to respect the rights of others and inspiring them the horror of duplicity, then your service to the Church and to society will have been fruitful, even without leaving the convent. (1918)

Show these poor little ones the way to know God, teach them to pray, to work, give them some instructions and education, plus some happiness... a work pleasing to God and useful to society. (February 26, 1928) ∞

Cause Délia-Tétreault
New email address
causedtetreault@gmail.com



HE WORE **NO** DISTINCTIVE SIGN

In light of the religious decline and the crumbling of our societies, humanity is more than ever in need of Jesus and secularization.

André Gadbois

¹ André Gadbois, Author

Photo Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

He wore no distinctive sign, did not attend a rabbinical school, had no title pinned on His lapel. He denounced the religious formalities of His time as well as the profiteers who used the temple space for their own purposes. He refused to be associated with the powerful who threatened people in the name of some divinity. It was His 'custom' to attend services on the Sabbath at a synagogue. Speaking the words of the Prophet Amos, He challenged the religious authorities of His time: *Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream, says the Lord* (Am 5:22,24).

He declared that what belongs to Caesar must be given to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. He publicly affirmed that religion is at the service of man and not the reverse. Time and time again He made clear that His Kingship was not that of an earthly kingdom obtained by military power; it was rather a spiritual Kingdom to be established in truth. He would reign in hearts, not in armies. This pleased fearful Caesar! And since the religious and the political were not separate, the two entities, while taking into account their respective interests, rallied together to eliminate Him and have peace. History as it describes the Humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, names Him the Christ, the prophet of Nazareth, a man who lived as a simple lay person and was entirely free, loving humanity unconditionally. Jesus was a discreet lay person,

Jesus was rarely where people expected to see Him.



attentive to everyone, seeking justice and reconciliation. He was critical of power, of obscene entertainment, of wealth that produces wars and poverty. He himself was poor, meek, compassionate, just, merciful, a peace maker.

In a society where, with reason, we mistrust all that is religious, Humanity is more than ever in need of a lay person like Jesus of Nazareth and in need of secularization. This does not imply the disappearance of religion. The State is a human institution, the result of historical development, the work product of men and women who desire to live together on the same territory. The State is no longer sacred *because the modern political culture does not recognize it as having the competence to tell us whether God exists or not. The State does not know and cannot know if there is life after death. Finally, it does not have the necessary competence to deny the sacred in the name of science... Therefore, a secular State does not promote any conviction in terms of religious matter, whether atheism, or any kind of religious belief, the State favors none.*¹

A DREAM PERCHED HIGH

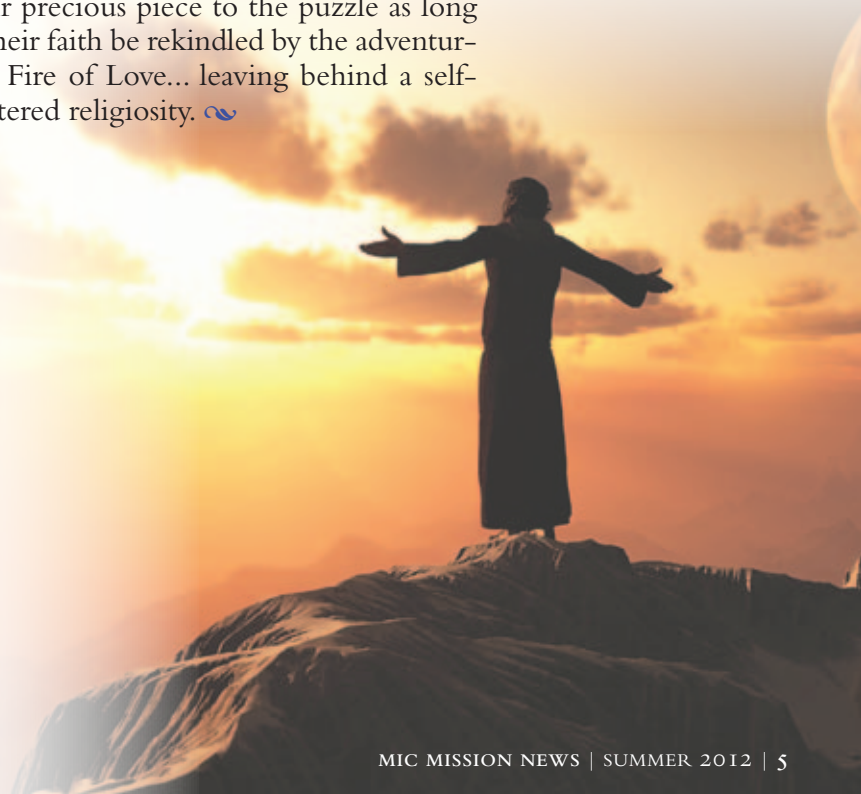
Jesus was rarely where people expected to see Him (example in the temple), or with a certain class of people such as the pure, the strong, the powerful, the winners. He moved about, took to the road, observed the individuals He met along His journeys. He preferred personal encounters instead of meetings. Jesus had a dream, He wished to raise the individual's consciousness to his/her true self, capable of being instruments of a Pentecost, notwithstanding the dualism that lies within: goodness/evilness, peace/war, meekness/revolt, pettiness/greatness. Jesus had a vision of each person and it came from His oneness with His Father whom He called "Abba". Jesus desired the full development of each one's

dignity and potential; thinking and acting in terms of the common good so no one gets lost. This is the challenge! A marvelous challenge for all Christians to redefine themselves within a secular society; to reconsider our responsibilities not so much in terms of Church or of past doctrines, but in terms of the poor neglected by political institutions, the endangered environment, the audacious Word of the Prophet of Nazareth. Redefining our purpose in life according to the project of God our Father is our challenge.

*Without the full realization of the transcendent self, without a model of society to pursue, without exemplary lives to imitate, each one is reduced to a narrowness of everyday living... What we are going through is the process of a general disintegration of the whole existence.*² Why live? How can we live harmoniously together? These are the imperative and inescapable questions which need to be addressed in a society that has endorsed secularism. These are the questions to which Christians can bring their precious piece to the puzzle as long as their faith be rekindled by the adventurous Fire of Love... leaving behind a self-centered religiosity. ∞

¹ ROCHER, Guy – *Quebec in Search of Secularism*, Ecosociété 2011, p.24-25

² PIOTTE, Jean-Marc – *The Lost Community*, VLB 1987, p. 127



THE CHURCH

The Archdiocese of Montreal Has a New Archbishop. Pope Benedict XVI appointed Monsignor Christian Lépine as Archbishop of Montreal's Catholic Diocese to replace Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte.

Jacinthe Lafrance



Monsignor Christian Lépine

Photo Credit:

Diocese of Montreal

His appointment as Archbishop of Montreal came last March, after a succession of eight other nominations of diocesan bishops in the Province of Quebec. It took approximately one year for the Holy See to find so many qualified priests for this function—priests endowed with a strong faith and a spirit of hope enabling them to accept such a responsibility within the current context of our society.

Such a ministry is not an easy one. Monsignor Lépine will be faced with challenges similar to those of his colleagues but tenfold greater within the Church of Montreal. If the transfiguration of an emerging Church is giving people hope, managing the decrease in human and material resources, adapting to the secularist pressures and interreligious dialogue, dealing with the upfront scandals and the clashing multi-visions of Church, then all these issues which summarize only the tip of the iceberg will need to be dealt with.

Very much in the limelight of the media due to his presence in the metropolitan area, the Archbishop has a very demanding task. He must have the capacity to hear the suffering of the people and to bring an evangelizing Word in this mission land which Quebec has become. Monsignor Lépine will have to draw from his pastoral and teaching experiences to unify the Church of Montreal and to keep

it united with all the other local Churches. He is known to be simple and discreet; the public interviews which took place at the time of his nomination revealed a person who is humble, patient and deeply attached to the Christian teaching centered on God's love for the human being.

Christian Lépine is the eldest of five children. After his studies in Theology, at the University of Montreal, he was ordained priest on September 7, 1983. As a priest, his duties alternated between parish pastoral services and studying Philosophy in Rome; in 1996 he accepted the direction of Cardinal Turcotte's Secretariat. Two years later, he was called to Rome where he worked for the Vatican's Secretary of State and for the Congregation of Divine Worship from 1998-2000.

Upon his return to Canada, he was appointed director of the Major Seminary in Montreal until 2006. He was then named as pastor of two parishes in Repentigny: 'Notre-Dame-des-Champs' and 'Purification de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie'. His parish ministry lasted until his Episcopal ordination. He became auxiliary Bishop on September 10, 2011, just before celebrating his sixtieth birthday; six months later, he assumed the leadership of the Archdiocese of Montreal, the second largest in Canada, with a Catholic population of 1,494,132 spread out in 214 parishes and ethnic communities. ∞

...IN MOTION



The International Eucharistic Congress – Dublin 2012

In June 2008, during the closing Mass of the 49th International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) Pope Benedict XVI announced where the next Congress would take place: *"I invite you all to join me in praying for the success of the next International Eucharistic Congress which will take place in 2012 in the city of Dublin, Ireland."* Thus began the hope-filled adventure for the Church of Ireland, welcoming the faithful Catholic pilgrims from June 10–17, 2012.

The 50th International Eucharistic Congress coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council. An excellent opportunity for the Church to renew and deepen its understanding in terms of: Body of Christ and People of God. For this reason, the theme *The Eucharist: communion with Christ and with one another* was inspired by the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium) of the Second Vatican Council. It proclaims Christ as Light of the nations.

Each day included some catechetical teaching, witnessing and celebration. The participants were able to choose from a

variety of workshops and speeches, some of which were in French. Hundreds of Canadians participated in this world-wide Church event. Sr. Doris Lamontagne, PEM, from the Diocese of Quebec and one of the IEC organizers stated that in 2004, when the Congress was held in Guadalajara, Mexico, there was an attendance of approximately two hundred Canadians. For many the price of the trip was a deterrent factor.

On this side of the Atlantic, certain communities took part at a distance. Every day, ECDQ.TV broadcasted the catechetical instructions; anyone who had an interest in what was being offered could follow on the internet.

The Church is in motion and more than ever we must find a sense of communion, declares Sr. Doris. As indicated on the IEC 2012 web site: *In the Eucharist we are invited to a personal act of encounter with the Lord who gives Himself to us, in Word and Sacrament. That encounter opens the path for new relationships in which we, as Church and as individual Christians, are invited to engage in a social mission, in which we in turn are given for others.* ∞



Jacinthe Lafrance

She's first and foremost a journalist. Communications and writing on church issues has been in the forefront of her interests for the past 15 years. She is the editor-in-chief of the magazine *En Communion* and is also in charge of communications in the Diocese of Nicolet. As a freelance writer she has been a steady collaborator to the magazines *Présence* and *Inner Space*, while also writing for other publications. It is her first contribution to *MIC Mission News*.

ANSELM GRÜN

What are the great mystics of today like? Those intuitive persons who are in contact with the divine, those great thinkers who scrutinize the human soul, do they still exist? The author of this article tells us about a person she immensely desired to meet.



Carole Guévin

Assistant Director of the MIC Missionary Press, Carole lived in Nicaragua and Lebanon as a lay missionary.

¹ www.psychologies.com/...
Anselm Grün

Anselm Grün
Photo Credit: Jérôme Martineau

To be a mystic in 2012, what could that possibly mean? Can a person like me become a mystic? With passion, I began reading many books written by Anselm Grün. Then, an idea came to mind! I absolutely had to meet this person. I promised myself to go and to meet him, as soon as possible, at his monastery in Germany where he resides. In the meantime, let us come back to the message of this great mystic.

TWO TYPES OF FAITH

In his writings, Anselm Grün links faith and psychology as integral parts. According to the author: *There are two types of faith: there is the sound, wholesome faith that consolidates good health, the other serves as a flight from reality more so before our personal inner realities. In this respect, psychology is a great help. It helps the believer in understanding the movements of the soul, it enhances self-knowledge. [...] Psychology's essential role is to lead the believer to be genuine and to conceal nothing from the self. The self-image and the image of God are indissoluble; therefore, if we have a negative, unhealthy self-image we also have a bad image of God¹*

Jesus Himself said: *The Kingdom of God is within you* (Lk 17:21). To reach this path, this inner space where the soul meets the Creator, a person must first have a true understanding of self. A patient work of art is required to be where God is—where no wrong can touch me and where I can be free from all human judgments. It is within the sacred silent space of my being that is found my true identity.

Oh yes, I must not forget! Father Anselm Grün came to Quebec for the first time last November. I had the incredible chance of having a short conversation with this theologian, mystic and psychotherapist who is also the financial and personnel director of 400 paid employees working at the Münsterschwarzach Abbaye in Germany. Anselm Grün is a benevolent, calm, clear-sighted person whose gaze is profound and whose open-mindedness is captivating. Grün reaffirms that the universal values such as generosity, compassion, tolerance are the first steps towards a philosophy encompassing a humane globalization. *Judge not, but understand*, is the message he conveys. ☺

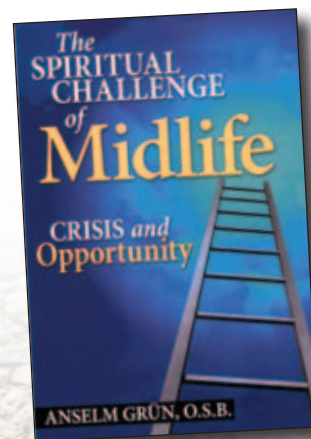
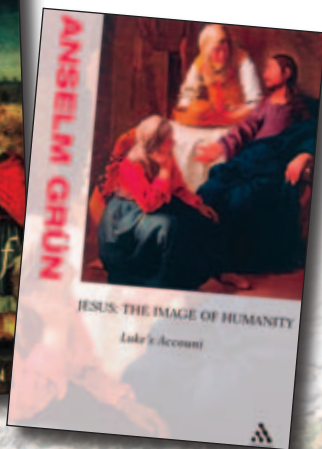
In one of his books entitled: *VIEILLIR DANS LA SÉRÉNITÉ/AGING WITH SERENITY* written in French only, Anselm Grün states the following:

And what if old age was a renaissance? A path that leads through all stages of life, real life, life that even death cannot destroy. *Alere* the Latin root, “feed, grow” reminds us that old age is part of a positive movement of becoming. It is not a static state, frozen in time, but the silent beginning of a new life.

But how to age well? Nature, through the seasons, shows us how. Spring represents the beginning of life; summer shows its fullness; fall, with its many colors, is reaping time; winter is the season of silence and rest, preparing for the growth of a new life. Thus, aging is like a fruit we see mature with pleasure, that we savor, and at the same time enriches others. [...] [back cover of book; publisher: Médiaspaul]. ☺



Also from Anselm Grün (English editions)



Great Changes on Our Website!



Véronique Martel

Always attentive and active, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC) are delighted to launch their improved website. Having been on the web since October 1999, the MIC Community decided to update its website in order to give you access to greater content and functionalities. Though renewed, you will be able to have access to information which was on the former site. The accessibility and the navigation have

been improved; it will be easier to contact us, to learn more about our missions, our Foundress Délia Tétreault, or to encourage us in our projects. Our 'You Tube' personalized account will allow you to view hours of exclusive content; you will be able to consult the archives to find past issues, read the articles or editorials you are looking for; you will find sections of the current issue; you will also be able to comment on the articles in the section to this effect. If you wish to know about the people who collaborate in producing the magazine, a brief biography of each one will be presented; this and much more will make our new website interesting. Moreover, it will be easier to make donations to the community or to *subscribe to our magazine via our secure online payment methods*.

In order to be at the cutting-edge of technology, a Quick Response Code (similar to a barcode) will be installed on the back cover of our future MIC Mission News. You will be able to scan this code with a 'smart phone' and you will be automatically redirected to our new website. Besides the layout change, you will note that the background design for each page will depict Délia's dream: *stalks of wheat whose ears were changed into children's heads from around the world*.

So, this Summer 2012, we invite you to watch for the new website of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. 🌾



www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca



SECULARISM: A TOOL FOR SOCIAL PEACE? A CHANCE FOR EVANGELIZATION?

Micheline Laguë, M.I.C.

Secularism (in French, *laïcité*)¹ is the principle of separation between State and organized religions or atheism. It does not belong to the State to express itself on the existence or non existence of God. It must not interfere in the realm of spiritual beliefs. Therefore, the neutrality of the State is the necessary condition to respect religious pluralism and to preserve the equality of treatment for all citizens. From the rise of secularism in Quebec and Canada emerges a whole combination of social and philosophical data and notions. How do we understand this? The following glossary might clarify our understanding; in a way it is designed to favor social peace. Will it reach its goal? You will be able to evaluate and judge for yourself.

Pondering upon ‘secularization’ in the light of the Gospel we find its roots in Jesus’ reply to those who tried to trap Him: *Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s* (Lk 20:25). There is also the attitude of the disciple—that of relentlessly learning from situations such as change, evolution, newness experienced by human beings and societies. Christ’s disciples are invited to grasp this opportunity of change that comes from secularism; they are called to question the way they live out their faith while respecting the others in their differences: socially, culturally and religiously. This is a saving chance for all Christians to review their faith on a personal and ecclesial dimension

¹ The term ‘*laïcité*’, in the English Quebec’s official documents, expresses the legally formalized secular separation between organized religions and State.

Photo Credit: Farah François



Network of MICs involved in Christian Life Formation. Author of the article: Micheline Laguë, M.I.C. (2nd left).

Photo Credit: Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

GLOSSARY

Document produced by Micheline Laguë, M.I.C. - Provincial Days for the MIC Sisters, April 27-28, 2012

Culture:

That which contributes in developing the human being in all aspects, personal and community-wise. Culture of a people: a group or a society's way of living—a collective way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is acquired, developed, transformed and transmitted. There are distinctive traits—spiritual and material, intellectual and affective.

Humanism:

A system of thought that centers on the human being and its development. It is an intellectual movement which originated in Europe during the Renaissance period; it was based on the study of Greek and Latin languages and literature. It is founded on the belief that the human being can be saved by its own human capacity. A humanist wants the good of the individual and of all humanity.

Interculturalism:

A combination of processes which enables exchanges to take place between two individuals of a different culture. It also applies to relationships between cultural generations and this in all areas: social, professional, philosophical, religious, political, economical—elements that fashion the identity. In the Province of Quebec, interculturalism is a “bidirectional” model; it acknowledges the legitimacy of the ‘majority culture’ striving to preserve the essential elements of its identity while integrating elements of other cultures in view of promoting a common culture.

Laicity:

The French version of secularism which is the principle of separation between State and organized religions or atheism.



Workshop period.

Photo Credit: Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



You have a question?

Photo Credit: Farah François

Multiculturalism:

A coexistence of different cultures in the midst of a society as well as in a country. This reality taken into consideration leads to political legislation which differs from country to country. In Canada, the idea: “live and let live” according to one’s culture and belief led the Canadian Multiculturalism Act to become a law in 1988. Its aim is to preserve and enhance equal acceptance of races, religions and cultures.

Pluralism:

A system which acknowledges diversity in political opinions, faith backgrounds, different convictions, life styles and cultural patterns without trying to impose norms. Pluralism is a prime factor for the foundation of a democracy which implies, in particular, the existence of different political parties.

Religion:

A way for the human being of relating with the Divine, the sacred; the individual acknowledges a supernatural absolute power and sets the course of his/her life directly toward God to whom obedience and respect is due. Religions are defined as a specific system of beliefs, worship, rituals, practices, prayers by which a people, a society, a community relates to God, to the sacred and *looks back* at the historical transmission of the faith.

Secular State:

A human institution which is officially neutral in matters of religion. The sociological legitimacy of its existence justifies its authority and its powers. The secular State is neither religious, nor irreligious but is a-religious (without any religious dimension).

Secularism:

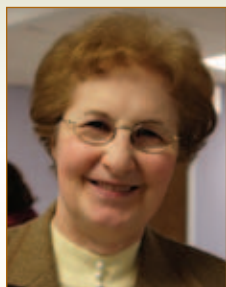
A philosophical position about the way things should be in the sphere of knowledge, values, and actions, independently of any religious influence.

Secularization:

Defines the internal process in a society whereby religion gradually loses its previous all-encompassing ascendancy over the influence of other social fields. Religion can remain relevant for individuals, but can no longer impose itself upon society as a whole. A practical consequence of secularization is the separation of religion and State which means that political institutions are removed from both direct and indirect religious control.

To Fear or To Understand

Secularization, reasonable accommodation, religious education no longer taught in schools, the Parliament building and its crucifix, religious symbols, these are all themes associated with the concept of secularization and here in Quebec it has been a hot topic. However, secularization is not a new phenomenon; we are still a young nation, we follow behind other countries who have already endorsed the notion of secularization. We have a chance to observe their experience in the light of history but our post-modern societies will approach the subject differently as we live in another context.



Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

LET'S DEMYSTIFY!

We can affirm that with its Revolution, France has been the leader in becoming a secular society. Up until 1789, France had been governed by an absolute monarchy and of divine right. The king was crowned and anointed with the Sacred Oil from the Holy Ampulla; thus, the French monarchy was closely linked to the Catholic Church. The latter interfered in State matters and the State also took upon itself some Church rights—certain monarchs went as far as naming and appointing bishops and abbots.

From 1789 to 1792, France saw the destruction of the old regime, the end of absolute monarchy as well as the end of ecclesiastical privileges. The Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen became the fundamental law of the French Revolution. In 1871 the Paris Commune voted a decree on the separation of the Catholic Church and the State; in 1905 this separation we extended to all denominations and all cults.

In Turkey, since 1920 the State has gradually become secular, progressively eliminating Islam from the political sphere. However, Turkish secularism is not a secular separation—the State retains control over official Islam.

ENIGMATIC JAPAN!

This country, where I worked for many years, also has its story on secularism. Shinto—the long standing religion observed by the Japanese from time immemorial, implies spontaneous following of the “WAY OF THE GODS”. As of 1889, the Constitution of the Great Japan Empire gave many responsibilities and powers to the Emperor based on the Shinto legend—all Japanese emperors had as ancestor the Sun Goddess: AMATERASU. Shinto was then recognized as the State’s religion and its temples were maintained by the State. Though the Constitution of 1889 acknowledged freedom of religion, the State’s Shinto obliged all Japanese subjects to practice it; the State strictly controlled

and repressed those who would question the divinity of the Emperor, such as the Christians and certain Shinto sects would do. This wave of thinking gave birth to a national ideology which led the country to believe that their nation was guided by a descendant of the Goddess—AMATERASU, the greatest of all gods. Henceforth, they necessarily had to dominate their neighbors; ultra-nationalism and militarism thus came into being. By venerating the Emperor, patriotism was exalted and legitimized the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, of China in 1932 and of the Pacific War in 1941.

In 1945 after the two atomic bombings on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan announced its surrender to the Allies. From 1945 till 1952 Japan was governed by the Supreme Headquarters presided by General Douglas MacArthur.

FROM SHINTOISM TO SECULARISM

The Allies and General MacArthur strongly encouraged a democratic reform in Japan and a pre-condition was the separation of Shinto and State. In 1945, the Shinto Directive was issued abolishing Shinto as a State religion and teaching it was quickly eliminated from the public schools. In a statement delivered on January 1, 1946, the Emperor Hirohito renounced his divine prerogatives thus ending imperialism. The 1946 Constitution proclaimed the sovereignty of the people and established a parliamentary monarchy; the Emperor thus became a symbol of unity for the people.

The Constitution affirms the secularization of the State and contains clear clauses pertaining to the separation of religious and temporal matters. Article 20 guarantees freedom of faith for all and stipulates that no religious organization can receive privileges from the State nor exercise any kind of political authority. No one is constrained from holding a religious belief, or participate in a cult, act, rite or ceremony. The State and its government officials must refrain from all religious activities. No public funds or State property can be spent or utilized for the

benefit or maintenance of an institution or religious association; neither can it be used for charitable, educational, volunteer work outside the control of the State.

Though strict, affirming the principle of secularization does not signify hostility toward religions and the Churches in Japan. The State guarantees freedom for all religions. Since the 1970s Mission Schools have been subsidized by the State as long as they comply with the educational norms established by the Education Department. Because parents freely choose to send their students to the Mission Schools, religious teaching is tolerated.

Couldn't secularization be a peace factor for all societies?

ADVANTAGES OF A SECULAR SOCIETY

Unfortunately, it is with an anti-religious spirit that secularism in France took shape. In Japan, it was completely different—it was an imposed secularization. But thanks to its principle and the demystification of the Emperor's status, Japan lived through an era of peace and prosperity. Sometimes we say that Japan has become the commercial Center of religions. Indeed, there is a profusion of them, they live in harmony, and above all, none of them can impose their beliefs or laws on the government.

In France, it is equally true that in the long term, secularization has been globally recognized as being beneficial not only for the Catholic Church but also for all the other denominations. However, in Turkey there is an on-going struggle against re-emerging Islamism.

For the past two centuries, secularization is at the heart of changes in the civil life of many countries and this gives rise to important debates. Couldn't secularization be a peace factor for all societies? ~

¹ Japanese pilgrim site.

Photo Credit: Junzō Kitao

² Shanta Festival—Shinto Ritual

Photo Credit: Keizō Kaneko



The Process of Secularization in Quebec: *a bit of history*



Louise Melançon has a Ph.D. in theology from the Institut catholique de Paris. She taught for 29 years at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Sherbrooke. Co-founder of *L'Autre Parole*, she is particularly interested in feminist issues in theology and ethics.

Louise Melançon, theologian

Members of *The Association of Canadian Religious for Women's Rights (ARDF)*:
(left to right)

Paulette Gagné, M.I.C.;
Louise Melançon,
author of the article;
Céline Gauvin, M.I.C.;
Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.

Photo Credit:
M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

The words 'layman' and 'laity' (laos) come from ecclesiastical vocabulary and contrast with 'clergy' or 'clergyman': the concept of laity therefore refers to a delimitation of powers within the Church itself. This was during the reign of 'Christendom' in the West, before the separation of Church and State. After the French Revolution, the word 'laity' (*laïque* in French) was used in France to refer to all the people, outside of any religious framework. More than a mere linguistic question, however, the evolution of lay or secular society corresponds to the birth of modernity during a time in Europe when societies, as well as individuals, began calling for autonomy from any power that sought to impose itself upon them. In 1905 in France, the secularization of the State was decreed by law. A society as a whole thus becomes secular when the powers of the State and the Church, or religions in general, are separated: the religious neutrality of the State thereby protects the free-

dom of conscience and the freedom of religion. It also promotes equality for all.

One would be mistaken, however, to consider secularization outside of its historical, social and cultural context. There are many ways secularization can unfold, depending on the society, culture, and social practices in which it develops. As far as women are concerned, it must be said that they had to find their own way to establish equal rights with men: initially, they were not included in the Declaration of Human Rights. The history of New France began in the 17th century under the reign of Christendom. The missionary project of evangelization was directed towards American natives who were considered 'pagans', even if they had their own brand of spirituality. The arrival of English Protestants already brought a certain religious diversity to the colonies. After the British Conquest in 1760, a long history of coexistence and tolerance began between Catholics and Protestants, such as

the sharing of churches. The Act of Paris, in 1763, established freedom of worship. In 1791, when Upper and Lower Canada were divided, an article in the Constitution prohibited members of the clergy, whether Catholic or Anglican, from being elected to public office, a small foretaste of secularism. The projected Constitution of the Patriots, whose rebellion in 1834 was harshly put down by the English, and who were supported by the leaders of the Catholic Church, was secular in nature. After the Act of Union in 1840, the Catholic clergy took advantage of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, imposing its own views and collaborating with the English in order to obtain advantages and rights for itself. The Canadian Constitution of 1867, however, contains no references to Churches, or to God.

A century later in Quebec, after the death of Duplessis in 1959, the Liberal Party came to power and transformed Quebec into a modern State, a transformation which involved taking over religious institutions, schools and hospitals, setting up government ministries, among these are the Ministry of Education (1964), the Parent Report, the foundation of CEGEP (collège d'enseignement général et professionnel/a public college of general and professional education). This was the beginning of the 'Quiet Revolution'. Further changes would come from social movements, students, unions, and the feminist movement. In 1975, the National Assembly adopted the Charter of Individual Rights and Liberties. During the 1980s and 90s, the confessional nature of schools became a hotly debated issue. From the constitution of 1867 onward, there had been a system of Catholic and Protestant schools. The arrival of immigrants from various religious traditions, however, rendered this situation no longer viable. After the Proulx Report in 1999, the National Assembly created linguistic school boards. The Parti Québécois, in power at the time, had to resort to the notwithstanding clause in the Charter of Rights and Liberties in order to do so. Still, confessional instruction remained. Finally, in 2005, the government decreed the end

of confessional instruction in the schools, replacing it with a cultural approach to the teaching of religion through a course called Ethics and Religious Culture.

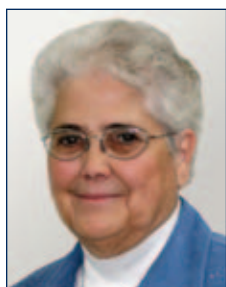
In the years that followed, incidents reported in the media concerning 'reasonable accommodation' provoked chain reactions among individuals and groups, resulting in the government setting up the Bouchard-Taylor Commission. Citizens presented reports, and came forward to voice their opinions in the various regions of Quebec. What came out of this process overall was the affirmation and attachment to the value of the equality of men and women, as well as a perception of a 'threat' to the Quebec national identity. The Commission's report was tabled in 2009: it proposed, globally, an 'open secularism' and sparked various reactions, such as that of the Council on the Status of Women, which expressed its fear of too much freedom for religions and, in addition, indicated the absence of equality between men and women as a collective value in Quebec. The CSW also called for a Charter of Secularism.

The women of Quebec won their rights in heated battles over a period of 60 years. Micheline Dumont, a renowned historian professor and a specialist in the history of women in Quebec, points out that even if the separation of Churches and the State in Canada dates back to the 18th century, equality between men and women was not achieved. Even the Patriots, in spite of being great defenders of lay society, deprived women of their right to vote. Similarly, even after the establishment of the Civil Code in Lower Canada in 1866, married women remained under the Napoleonic Code and Common Law, which had greater influence on judges and lawyers.

Beyond their divergence of views and strategies, women's groups agree in their recognition and denunciation of the fact that patriarchal religions oppressed women in the past and continue to do so to a large extent today. Furthermore, they agree on the necessity of a secular State that ensures the recognition of the equality of women and men in society. ♻️

Freedom of Heart

In a world and in a society that is in search of meaning, in pursuit of its identity and its roots, it is imperative to trace back through the ages those individuals whose hearts had such a great sense of direction that they were able find their way through multiple commitments. Their freedom of heart generated enthusiasm and a desire to live fully in the manner of Jesus who said: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (Jn 10:10) These persons speak to us of freedom.



Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

FREEDOM TO DREAM...

Yes, freedom to dream. The great Canadian music composer, Robert Lebel, wrote a song for the occasion of the MIC centennial in 2002; the refrain spoke about a dream: *A dream is a dream, but it can also be the first words of a letter where the future is written; a dream is a dream, but it could also be like a door left ajar for the future to enter.*

That's the way it was in 1902 when Venerable Délia Tétreault, saw her childhood dream become a reality. What had she seen in her prophetic dream? A large field of fine ripe wheat; then at one point all those ears of wheat were changed into heads of children. With time, various events and apostolic experiences revealed the hidden message behind her childhood dream: she was to found a community whose members would go share the Good News of God's unconditional love to all those who had never heard the Message; thus giving God children who would praise Him, the loving Father. Many women, from our homeland, recognized them-

selves in that dream; they too dreamt of those far-away places. Leaving behind their possessions, they reached the unknown, mysterious China of those days—it happened in 1909. *Through the door that had been left ajar, the future of the Institute was beginning to write its life history.* The first Canadian religious community, *essentially missionary*, was given to the Church of Quebec; it bore the fruits of a child's dream. A dream from the Spirit always strikes the chord of dedication.

FREEDOM TO DARE...

It was in 1840, Rosalie Cadron-Jetté, a widow since 1832 decided to consecrate her life for the welfare of young single mothers, who at that time were judged unfavorably and rejected by the society. Her mother, Rosalie Roy, was a midwife; therefore, the daughter had long been prepared for such an adventure. Taking upon herself a leading role, Rosalie Cadron-Jetté operated out of the attic of a house; an outdoor ladder had to be climbed to reach the dwelling. It is there that unwed mothers, in need of crisis accommodation and medical care, would come to receive protection and affection. Can we imagine the many difficulties Rosalie encountered? To cope with the unfriendly, adverse media coverage of those days, audacity was very much needed. Fortunately, there were some sympathizers. Funds began to trickle in and with this help life began to be somewhat smoother. Other women who felt called to this kind of work joined Rosalie and in 1848 she founded a religious community known as the Institute of Misericordia Sisters; this was the first Institution of a kind in Canada.



Upon pronouncing her religious vows, Rosalie took on the name of Mother of the Nativity. Having such a maternal heart, could it have been otherwise? These are the fruits of the freedom to dare.

FREEDOM TO BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

The well-known André Bessette, our holy Brother André, who as a doorman at Notre Dame College would contemplate the wooded area of Mount Royal, made an unimaginable dream come true. He could see a small chapel for his great friend Saint Joseph: a place where he could bring the poor and sick people to pray Saint Joseph; a shrine where people could come together to reflect, pray, or intercede for those in need. But that piece of land had to be bought; however, it was not for sale. In no way could it be purchased. Humble Brother André, the doorman, kept praying and hoping. His Community, the Brothers of the Holy Cross wished to acquire the land. In 1904 the sale came through. Immediately, Brother André's request was put forward: *Can I have a small piece of the land? The purpose is to build a small chapel for Saint Joseph.* As usual, the "yes" had a price. No problem, Saint Joseph will take care of it. The work began, the small chapel was erected. From year to year, the multitude of people kept increasing; the little chapel had to be extended. The popularity of the site and the countless pilgrims that came once again outgrew the small chapel. In 1917 a larger church was built, called the crypt. Soon, it also became too small; in 1924 the construction of the great basilica began and was finished in 1967. Montreal now has the world's largest shrine dedicated to Saint Joseph. Over the years, this shrine has become a mirror of the cultural diversity which makes up the Quebec society. Indeed, it is most fascinating to see people from all faith backgrounds, from diverse cultures, come together to pray in a peaceful atmosphere. From this unimaginable success has come forth an unexpected Spirit-filled togetherness. How true to this story is Carey Landry's song: *Surprise, surprise, God is a surprise!*



¹ Délia's dream, Foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

² Rosalie Cadron-Jetté, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

Photos Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

³ Official Canonization Album of Brother André

October 17, 2010,

Saint Peter's Square, Rome

Fides Edition, 2010

Photos Credit: Fides Edition



FREEDOM TO PROPOSE JESUS CHRIST...

Observing the various occurring disruptions which are rocking the Quebec society already aloof from its Christian roots for the past decades, a question is asked: How to express our faith in this context? Entering in relationship with Jesus while listening to His Word, the heart begins to feel its suffocation, its misery, its longing. The Samaritan at the well, went through such an experience. And Jesus said to her: *If you knew the gift of God* (Jn 4:10). After His teaching, the Samaritan replied: *Sir, give me this water so that I will no longer get thirsty* (Jn 4:15). This dialogue with Jesus is most inspiring. Like Him, under the inspiration of His Spirit, as we meet people along our way, we sometimes discover a non verbal search for the well-spring of Life. Proposing the person of Jesus and His Message can be the liberating way as it was for the Samaritan at the well. This is being a missionary right here at home. Gratitude goes out to all those who allow their Freedom of Heart to be a source of love within a secular society, whatever the context of its secularism. ☺

Mutual Aid – A Great Asset

The 2010 earthquake in Haiti left many women at a loss, having nothing to provide for their families. The Sisters of the Holy Cross who have been missionaries in Haiti for many years saw the misery and helplessness of these women.



Marie-Paule
Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

¹ Teaching at the sewing
center in Montréal

^{2,3} Teaching at the sewing
center in Haiti

Photos Credit: MIC

Sister Réjeanne Charest, C.S.C., originally from Saint-Flavien, Quebec, knew about the foundation *Dexterous Hands*—a center in Montreal, Quebec, where industrial sewing is taught to immigrant women. Sr. Réjeanne dreamt about such a project for the women at Blue Hills, nearby de la Fossette, in the commune (somewhat like a municipality) of Cap-Haitien.

KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

Sometimes we hesitate to knock at a door, but once done, why not continue? That's precisely what Sr. Réjeanne did. In 2009, the Sisters of Holy Cross had a project in mind—that of an industrial sewing center in Haiti. Their dream and preoccupation was to give the women of this country a way of earning their living and this dream was intensified in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. In partnership with the Sisters of Holy Cross and Dexterous Hands Center in Montreal, the workshop opened its doors in October 2011. The two partners asked help from CENTRECH who sent them a dozen industrial sewing machines. Then, Sr. Réjeanne wanted an assistant who had expertise in this area. By chance, she met Sr. Yolande Laroche, M.I.C., also from Saint-Flavien, Quebec. The latter had been working and teaching for many years at Dexterous Hands Center. Sr. Réjeanne quickly took the opportunity to ask Sr. Yolande if she could come to Haiti to give her a helping hand in training the Haitian women in this new field, and also develop a network to supply this small enterprise.

Negotiations took place between the two religious communities. Finally, Sr. Yolande, a former missionary, with years of experience in Africa, packed-up her suitcases and flew to Haiti. Upon her arrival, she immediately felt at home with the Holy Cross Sisters

as well as with the Haitian people. She had that spark of joy which comes from being at the service of all. Without delay, Sr. Yolande rolled up her sleeves, began to work and share her knowledge. She first began by training future instructors, she taught them how to take care and repair the sewing machines, and tried to find outlets that could bring in some income for the workers. Quite a challenge!

The initial training program includes the following:

- Know the names of the parts that make up a sewing machine.
- Learn how to perform the maintenance of a machine.
- Know how to thread the needles correctly.
- Learn how to operate the machine: following a straight line, using the presser foot and reversing the stitch lever.
- Design patterns, calculate in centimeters and also in inches.
- Cut the material (beginning with a sample) and then sew.
- At first, make simple pieces of clothing, and with time become specialists.

In almost all fields, the country has suffered from a great loss of qualified manpower. With her competence, Sr. Yolande will try to find a solution and make 'things right' for the population. She has written us:

In Haiti, our 'Dexterous Hands' Center is coming along well. This past week-end I went to Port-au-Prince with a teacher to shop for things we needed: we bought material by the yard, thread, zippers, elastics, etc. The first group of women is preparing a ball which will take place on April 1st. They are currently sewing their outfit: a shirt, similar to a T-shirt and a black skirt. They are very proud of their achievements and will put on a fashion show

to demonstrate what they have accomplished. These women will be given an extra month at the center because they feel they do not know quite enough to set out to work.

Last week, we went to visit a sewing factory at Ouanaminthe which is on the frontier line between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Approximately 7,000 employees are working there. Sewing is on a very large scale; the women are mostly involved and there is plenty of work. What a contrast with our seven women! The Caracol Industrial Park which is currently being built close-by our center will open in the very near future; perhaps more candidates will then apply at our sewing center and more projects will be made available. We will see...

A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE

Sr. Yolande's letter reveals joy and hope. The Sisters foresee an added training course in Montreal for two teachers and four mechanics specializing in repair and maintenance of the sewing machines. The center is hoping to receive another dozen from CENTRECH. The workers' first contract will be to sew school uniforms for all the students who attend schools directed by the Sisters of Holy Cross and perhaps even all the uniforms for the schools in one of the Northern Departments. That would be fantastic!

With the new machines, the workshop will become economically self-sufficient; will be able to provide diversified services as well as quality products which could be offered to the industrial park. The organization *Dexterous Hands* from Montreal considers *Dexterous Hands* from Haiti as a foreign subsidiary and is ready to send them work.

This joint adventure promises a more harmonious life for all the families whose mothers work at *Dexterous Hands*. What is the meaning of this expression? *Dexterous Hands* signifies skillful hands, particularly in the line of sewing. This organization was founded in 1994, in Montreal, by Sr. Denise Arseneault, Holy Cross Sister. The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception are most happy to participate in this charitable organization which encourages women to stand tall. A valued and sustainable initiative! 

Give the women of this country a way of earning their living.



Dawn Of A New Life

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



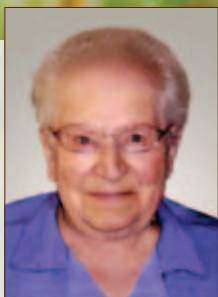
Simone Frigon, M.I.C. - Sr. Marie-Théotime (1921-2012), Dunham, Quebec

Born in Dunham, a village in the Eastern Townships, Sr. Simone was like a little flower in the fields who knew how to bloom where she was planted. At a young age, she was attracted to prayer and to stories from the mission world which she read in our magazine *Le Précurseur*. Her dream of becoming a missionary was realized at the age of 21; she entered our Novitiate at Pont-Viau on February 1, 1942. Seven years later she received a mandate to serve in Japan. During forty years it is with faith, enthusiasm, meekness and charity that she took up the challenges which came her way. Sr. Simone, thank you for the gentle flower you were in our midst.



Marguerite Julien, M.I.C. - Sr. Saint-Julien (1913-2012), St-Augustin, Quebec

After a happy childhood and a few years of teaching, Marguerite entered the MIC Novitiate in 1934. The war delayed her departure but in 1949 she was among the first MIC Sisters to open a mission at Mirebalais, Haiti. She wrote: *I tried to be an authentic daughter of Délia Tétreault by transmitting her spirit. I must say that those people were so friendly; I always felt at home in their country.* Sister gave her all to the people she was serving up until her return to Canada in 1988. Good teacher, joyful companion, humorous and full of life, Sr. Marguerite was serene until the very end of her life. She left us on February 12, 2012.



Lucille Prévost, M.I.C. - Sr. Saint-Eustache (1919-2012), Saint-Eustache, Quebec

Her name reveals who she was, Lucille a person of light. Preceded by six brothers and born on February 19, 1919 Lucille, the first girl, was a joy to the family. Loving life, she opted at the age of twenty-two to dedicate herself to a special cause—that of the Mission. She was appointed to Japan where she worked forty years; she knew how to manage the domestic chores with her other apostolic duties: visiting the sick, the prisoners, the disadvantaged. Her life-giving dynamism, her joy and spontaneity in speaking about Jesus and Mary attracted young people. She was what people thirst for: a true and passionate witness.

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