

MIC

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MISSION News



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AN UNFOLDING
MISSIONARY
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WALKING
THE WALK
OF LIFE

IN FOCUS

AN AUDACIOUS
MOVE – I JOIN IN!



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2012

OCTOBER

WORLD MISSION DAY — *We pray that on all the continents the World Mission Day may result in a renewed commitment to the new evangelization.*

NOVEMBER

THE PILGRIM CHURCH — *We pray that the pilgrim Church on earth may shine as a light to the nations.*

DECEMBER

CHRIST, LIGHT FOR ALL HUMANITY — *May Christ reveal Himself to all humanity with the light that shines forth from Bethlehem and is reflected in the face of His Church.*

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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



A Golden Jubilee

Fifty years! They were young, beautiful, confident in the future... They loved each other and both agreed to unite their lives for better or for worse. They were happy and the people around shared their joy.

It has been fifty years! A pope named John looked out the window and saw what was going on in the world. He opened the window and breathed in the fresh air. It was time, it was urgent to form an alliance with the people he saw and the rapid changes he noticed.

A Council was convened! The Church will never be the same as in the past. A new wind was blowing and the Bishops came from around the world to listen, to talk, to discuss and they understood that a new world was emerging from everywhere and it had new demands. And so the Church embarked on what was to be an audacious move.

It was a great moment in the history of the Church. Fifty years later, we are still exploring its richness written in the sixteen conciliar documents. The second Vatican Council has been an invaluable treasure.

Since that time, the Church has evolved. She has lost some of her members, but has found others. Of importance—it is on the move. *The conditions of this age lend special urgency to the Church's task of bringing all men to full union with Christ, since mankind today is joined together more closely than ever before by social, technical, and cultural bonds.*¹

Today, this issue offers you a brief reflection on some documents from the Council which focus on the sorrows and joys of peoples. By being informed we can embark with others in fighting injustices, proclaiming solidarity, and offering mutual aid to the nations.

The Mission of the Church is always to accompany the nations of the world on the path of Life presented by Jesus Christ who became one of us in order to tell all peoples of the Love of God the Father for each one of us.

Take time to read and enjoy these texts like an elderly couple, who after fifty years of commitment to each other, lovingly look and ponder upon the road they have walked together.

Marie-Paule Sanjacon, m.i.c.

¹ Lumen Gentium, no. 1

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

Délia Tétreault, audacious and completely trusting in God, does not hesitate to commit herself and her Institute to the service of the missionary Church...

We must not miss fulfilling the commitments I took in the name of all. (1914)

If I did not depend completely on God's assistance I would be very much pre-occupied beginning this great work to which we, poor little Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, have committed ourselves. (September 13, 1921)

We would accept taking charge of these works, committing ourselves to send as many Sisters as needed, and I believe I can assure you that they would dedicate themselves wholeheartedly. (January 24, 1931)

... on behalf of the poorest ones in particular.

Greatly love the poor ones whom God has confided to you—love them as your own children... Take care of them like the 'apple of your eye'. (November 15, 1913)

Our Institute was founded especially for the poor and I firmly believe that through these works God bestows His blessings. We are also allowed to take care of the rich, but only after the poor have been well served. (June 18, 1921)

Lately, you have had ten elderly men, ten poor to support by your work and your industriousness, how beautiful! How consoling! Always keep in mind these words of Our Lord: "I was hungry and you gave me food..." See how He identifies Himself with the poor—all those who suffer, it is He! With respectful tenderness you must surround them! (October 24, 1925) ∞

FOR ALL FAVORS RECEIVED

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A WINDOW LOOKING OUT ONTO THE STREET

*Fifty years ago, Vatican II was celebrating
the marriage of Humanity and the Church...
Currently, this couple is having a difficult time.*



André Gadbois

Perhaps I could also entitle this article: WASHING THE WINDOW PANE. Better yet, A RACE THAT RAN OUT OF BREATH — or — A PAINTING IN NEED OF A FACELIFT! Different titles to affirm that Vatican II (1962-1965) convened by the late Pope John XXIII was *a beautiful moment of free Episcopal expression*¹. Men (2365 bishops and cardinals) at first timid, then becoming more at ease, more free, were initiated to the principles of Catholic Action (see, judge, act) and *were able to design a renewed vision of Christianity for a planet on the path to globalization*.² Bishop Paul-Émile Charbonneau who was present at the Council wrote: *They discovered collegiality and refused the roman congregations' prefabrication*.³ They succeeded in hearing the voices of the local Churches.

VATICAN II: A MARRIAGE

I am of the generation when altar boys were paid ten cents for one mass with 2 servants, twenty cents for one servant. I served at so many masses (week-days, Sundays, funerals, weddings, vespers) that I succeeded in buying myself a three speed bicycle, a green Raleigh! At the time I was unaware of tasks that needed to be done within the Church because everything seemed orderly! I was already in heaven! But at the age of twenty-five, when I worked for the poor in down-

town Montreal, my eyes were opened and I became aware.. The world was on one side, the Church on the other. There was a gap, a wide trench. *The Sons of Charity, the Little Sisters of Jesus, and Father Pierre*, inspired me to take up the challenge. With much joy I welcomed the document entitled *The Church Today*—one of the sixteen documents voted by the Bishops. What a celebration to a homecoming! A marriage celebration between Humanity and the Church! Worth mentioning is the document on *Ecumenism* which put an end to the aloofness of the Roman Catholic Church toward other faiths. There is also the *Constitution on the Church* which underlined the common priesthood of the faithful (by way of Baptism) as inter-related to the ministerial priesthood. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the *Declaration of Religious Freedom*, the *Church's Missionary Activity*...

During the four sessions of three months each, the Fathers of the Council were intellectually awakened to new realities, their outlook and understanding shifted. In his opening address, Pope John XXIII had suggested that each participant be opened and guided by the principle of the 'pastoral dimension of doctrine': the Church's teaching is not above the Word of God but rather is at its service. Likewise, the Law is at the service of Humanity. This approach which John XXIII favored was well in line with Jesus and His Good News. Such an approach invites us to be attentive to persons, to individuals (especially the poor), it invites us to be humble in our statements, patient along the endless journey, and to welcome all persons no matter their origin or background.

BLURRED WINDOWS

Many are those who qualify Vatican II as having been a grand opening on the world; a renewed impetus took place reaching out to Humanity and inviting the Church to be servant and poor. Is it not Vatican II who favored, more than 40 years ago, the creation of Development and Peace, an organization created by the Bishops of Canada? Is it not Vatican II

who encouraged the existence of Parish Pastoral Councils, the restoration of the Catechumenate, the reaching-out to other Christian faiths, who transformed the way of living in religious communities and gave rise to other spiritual movements? Unfortunately, that opened window of 50 years was almost shut once again; the open window on the world has become blurred, is less transparent, the will to continue the race is lacking in vitality, and again, unnecessary details have been added. Could we say that the Catholic Church's current concerns are closely linked to those of the Prophet of Nazareth? Is the orientation which the Roman Congregations imposed on the Bishops in line with the Gospel of Jesus and the first Pentecost? Does our Church, on the five continents, represent Christ who in our midst continues to HEAL and RECONCILE? Have the numerous fruitful years which the Spirit produced during and after Vatican II been forgotten, rejected, and if so, why? The freedom of thought and expression which the Conciliar Fathers and their theologians experienced were of greatest value and importance; can we affirm that the current drab leveling and stuffiness targeted by the Roman Congregations is a fruit of the Holy Spirit? A systematic leveling—is this not a characteristic of those in authority who give no attention to persons?

¹ NAUD, André,

An Aggiornamento and Its Eclipse, Fides 1996, p. 21

² THEOBALD, Christoph, *Vatican II – A Forgotten Future*, Bayard 2005, p. 158/313

³ CHARBONNEAU Paul-Émile, *Celebrate the Announcement of Vatican II*, Novalis 2008, p. 24

The Church's teaching
is not above the Word of God
but rather is at its service.



Everywhere Jesus went, he stunned people. His gratuitousness, His unassuming Presence, His audacious actions sometimes qualified as dangerous, His attentive focus on EACH person; the liberating freedom He wished to give to everyone: the prisoners, the most fragile and weak ...to all He revealed the Father's benevolent Presence. At Pentecost, His Church took over. What is this Church like today? ~



A PLEASANT DISCOVERY

The following account illustrates well the statement once made by Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte who said that Quebec has become a mission land. Sister Danièle, a young Madagascan M.I.C. tells us of her experience with the natives.



Danièle
Rasoloarivony, m.i.c.

I first met the Algonquins of Lac Simon in February 2012 when I was attending a symposium on 'PREVENTING SUICIDE'. This event gave me the desire to embark on a daily voyage with them.

The following June, I lived an experience of solidarity with the Algonquin Community of Lac Simon and of the Great Lake Victoria within a context organized by the *MIC Youth Solidarity Project*¹. I allowed myself to be charmed by the realities of that region and opted for the group's goal which was to create friendly bonds with the Algonquins.

Lac Simon is located 35 kilometers from Val-d'Or in Abitibi, Quebec and has 1,400 inhabitants, the majority of whom are young adults and children. The Great Lake Victoria is 80 kilometers from Lac Simon. While we were there, the *Kokoms* (meaning grandmothers) were beginning to settle in for the summer months.

A PAINFUL PAST... FOR SOME... BUT NOT FOR THE CHILDREN!

I met some people who in their childhood years lived in residential schools. Their sad and painful experience is still very much part of their daily lives.

Having suffered in the past they do not want their children to go through the same drama; therefore, they are very concerned about the health and education of the young ones.

THE CHILDREN ARE THEIR TREASURES

I had the chance to participate in some activities organized by PAPAR (Pre-school Aid Program for the Algonquins on the reserves). The program revolves around six elements: education, health-care, culture, language, nutrition, social aid, parent and family commitment. PAPAR instills in the young ones: self-confidence and a great desire to learn; it teaches them to begin life with assurance and to reach for success. I met parents who were proud of their children and teachers who were sympathetic and kind.

At their Health Center I discovered the communion that exists among the Algonquins; each one is concerned about the well-being of the other—the weak, the poor, no one is left behind. They organized a collective kitchen where certain members of families come on a regular basis to prepare meals together. I greatly appreciated those friendly moments where bursts

TO FIND OUT MORE:

¹ www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca
(for English version press on
left hand side of site, then go to
/MIC Family)

of laughter preceded silence. There was a palpable joy of being together.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Daily contacts with the personnel and students of Amikobi primary school allowed us to become better integrated in the community. At first, we were observed but gradually the relationship became more and more heartwarming. In the streets, the children shouted to catch our attention; they readily came to the rectory to visit us. Intrigued, they began asking questions:

Are there any hippopotamus in your country? How long does it take you to come to Quebec? Why did you leave your country?

Spontaneously the answers were given: *My country is an island located in the Indian Ocean; it is close to the African continent. Yes, there are animals in my country but there are no hippopotamus. There are also children like you, children who like to play, who sometimes cry, who go to school. I came to Quebec by plane and it took 18 hours to get here. I left my country because I wanted to have friends like you.*

We felt at ease with each other and at the end of our stay the children knew my name and could identify my country. Madagascar is now a reality for them.

WHO SEES MY FATHER, SEES MY MOTHER

Thanks to Sr. Renelle Lasalle, S.S.C.C.J.M., pastoral agent of the local community, I was able to live an unforgettable experience with Francis, a nine year old boy. With his friends, he came once to the religious education class; the topic was on Mary the Mother of Jesus. Francis never showed up again! However, one evening he came to see me and asked:

At what time is the religious education class? My response: *There are no more classes; we have ended the two weeks. What is left is the Sunday liturgy.*

Sitting in front of me, he began talking. He wished to be among the group who came to the religious education classes. He then went on saying that he had lost his mother and lived with his father. As he told me his secret, he cried. He wanted to



¹ Algonquin children-Lac Simon

² Sr. Renelle, Sr. Danièle, Monik cutting up a bear

Photos Credit: Sr. S. Jean, M.I.C.

know God and asked: *Can you talk to me about Papa Jesus?*

This nine year old boy reminded me that God is both our Father and our Mother. He has discovered that through his father, whom he loves, his mother is always present. The next day, in his own little way, Francis taught the local community that God, the Father of Jesus, is our Father and that He dwells in our hearts.

THANKS TO THE VIRGIN MARY!

A great joy of mine was to speak of Mary to the children of Lac Simon. After school hours we would gather to hear inspiring stories taken from the Gospel. By way of mimes I taught them to pray the Our Father and the Hail Mary; we became true friends. Yes, I will keep beautiful memories of those precious children: their radiant faces, their smiles, their silence... We learned to live harmoniously with our differences. During those moments, Délia's dream was always present in my mind; the children of Lac Simon, the children elsewhere, the children around the world, God wants each one to have abundant life. Délia Tétreault's dream was to have them all sing God's goodness. ☺

Chants and Light



Three Wednesdays each month, young adults between the ages of twenty and forty gather at *Relais Mont-Royal* in Montreal, Quebec, to sing and pray. I had the opportunity, one evening, to participate in their world of silence, of prayers and chants. The following is the account of my encounter with the Taizé Community.



Véronique Martel

As I entered the Blessed Sacrament Sanctuary on Mount-Royal Avenue, I thought I would be attending an ordinary Mass. On the upper level, a traditional Mass was being celebrated; but that was not the place where I was to go. In fact, I had to walk down to the crypt level where Étienne Godard was waiting for me. In the early nineteen seventies *Relais Mont-Royal* was founded by COPAM (Communauté Partage et Amitié de Montréal); Étienne has been present at the *Relais* since its foundation. He presented me to the group who comes on a regular basis and to those who come occasionally. Étienne explained that the idea behind the *Relais* is for people to come for breathing space, to simmer down, to catch up with one's self, and once renewed from within

bring this new breath with them wherever they are meant to go; therefore, it is a passers-by oasis for some people.

Earlier, I had sent Mr. Godard an E-mail telling him of my coming and the content of my message was full of questions; his reply was very simple: *Véronique, you are welcome. See you tonight!* I was taken aback, I didn't know what to think and I didn't know what to expect. Of course, I had done some research work on the web, looking for information about the Taizé Community. I did learn that it was founded by a Brother in 1940 in Taizé, a town in France. It is ecumenical in nature, including people from various Christian denominations; it is meant to respond to the spiritual and religious needs of our times. I wondered what kind

of religious ceremony actually took place at the *Relais Mont-Royal*. I was astonished to meet people who were happy I had come and who gladly accepted that I participate in their ceremony. They could have excluded me because I was there out of curiosity and as a journalist, besides I could have been considered as an intruder within this intimate group. However, those thoughts do not correspond with the values or the spirit of the Taizé Community. Taizé is characterized by its openness and inclusion; these values model the way they think of religion, the way they communicate with God and others. Someone plays a transverse flute, another an acoustic guitar to accompany the chants which are uttered in many languages (French, English, Latin, Spanish, Greek) underlining the inclusive aspect of this Community.

SINGING IS PRAYING TWICE

Lasting approximately ninety minutes, the ceremony begins with chants of praise to the Lord. The Taizé chants have a special particularity; they contain very few words or phrases, but these are repeated continuously for the purpose of meditation. When I arrived I was given a brochure entitled: *Scriptural meditation, silence and Taizé chants*; the liturgical celebration gave way to introspection and meditation while favoring a time of sharing. After the first four chants and the reading of a parable, eight minutes were given for silent meditation after which members were invited to share their reflections and the fruit of their individual meditation. The ceremony then continued with a few chanted prayers and ended with prayer intentions. A priest, wearing civilian clothing, ended the ceremony with a simple phrase: *And for all those intentions deeply hidden in our hearts... Amen.*

After the ceremony, all are invited to take some refreshments. As I was approaching the table where biscuits and herbal teas were served, some members of the group came over to ask me what I thought of the ceremony. I, who had come to interview them, was being inter-

viewed by the participants; they wanted my opinion, they wanted me to share my experience of the evening. I therefore discussed with many of them; one of them Florence*, 41 years of age, had a story typical of others who were there. During her youth, Florence followed the path prescribed by the Catholic religion: she went to Church and received communion. Later in life, Florence turned away from religion and began searching—she had a spiritual quest. As an adult, she re-discovered her faith; it had not disappeared from her life, it simply had been submerged by the hubbub of everyday life. Florence has been coming to *Relais Mont-Royal* for almost ten years. She especially appreciates the way the Gospel readings are contextualized: *The Gospels are set within an urban context. It is a way of interpreting them, of explaining them from an angle that is contemporary. The Gospels are rooted in daily life and can be applied here and now.* Étienne Godard adds: *the prayers of Taizé are ecumenical; therefore, they are not specifically Catholic. At one time, an Imam and a Rabbi came to pray with us.*

The Gospels are rooted in daily life
and can be applied here and now.

What I retain from my experience with the Taizé Community is the unifying and universal aspect lived through meditative chants, inner silence, and a different way of communion with the Lord.

A word from the Founder, the late Brother Roger:

From the depths of the human condition a secret aspiration rises up. Caught in the anonymous rhythms of schedules and timetables, men and women of today are implicitly thirsting for an essential reality, for an inner life. Nothing is more conducive to a communion with the living God than a meditative common prayer with, as its high point, singing that never ends and that continues in the silence of one's heart when one is alone again. ∞

*Florence is a fictitious surname given to protect the identity of the members of the Taizé Community.

¹ Group prayer
at *Relais Mont-Royal*
Photo Credit: *Relais Mont-Royal*

TO FIND OUT MORE:

www.copam.ca
www.relaismontroyal.org



MONIK

— A Remarkable Woman

The Anicinapek of Kitcisakik have never left their ancestral land and the community has no recognized legal status. They are considered to be “squatters”. They continue to live in their traditional territory without benefit of adequate housing, running water or electricity. The Anicinapek speak French and Algonquin. Last June, the author went to the area with Solidarité-Jeunesse MIC.¹

By Carole Guévin

ISLAND OF LOG CABINS

Having arrived at Kitcisakik Health Center, Gabrielle and Janie, our two project participants and myself found a magnificent spot where an abundance of field flowers covered the soil. We crossed over and arrived at the island of log cabins. The 430 Algonquins who live there are considered nomads and the fifty log cabins on the island are occupied from May to September. This is where I met Monik Anicinapeo, a remarkable Algonquin woman.

A JOURNEY—ONE OF A KIND

Monique's life journey is atypical. Married at nineteen, she pursued her studies at the university and her training practice was at 'Lac Simon'—the Val d'Or school commission. Five other teachers were aboriginals. She taught French and Algonquin languages which are her specialization.

A PERIOD OF TORMENT

A spiritual journey and fifteen years of drug and alcohol addiction treatments were needed for Monik. With the help of God and her local community, she succeeded in re-discovering her dignity and the joy of living. Her wholehearted commitment toward her local community is part of her healing process. Every year, she makes a novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She organizes bingos as a fundraiser for the annual pilgrimage to Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré; the buses are full even to overcrowding. As pastoral agent she helps out at her Church during weddings, baptisms and funerals. During prayer services, Monik has no problem integrating herself to her own native community as well as to the non-natives.

Thanks to her leadership, her honesty, her transparency, her insight and her great capacity to listen well, Monik is very much appreciated in her community. She is a woman who radiates the kind of joy that is contagious.

Monik also takes care of families and their children's living conditions. The sense of belonging to the community is essential for her, therefore she organizes activities for the youth that helps them know and re-discover their culture and their Anicinapek identity. Intergenerational relations are equally important and are part of her community goal. In fact, Monik's mother who is 97 years of age has always lived with her. This native grandmother is the most respected in the local community and she is always given the last word.

For Monik, a memorable event in her life has been her trip to Rome where she witnessed Kateri Tekakwitha's canonization on October 21, 2012. ∞

TO FIND OUT MORE:

¹ *Solidarité-Jeunesse MIC:*
www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca
 (English: MIC Family/Solidarity Project)

Monik Anicinapeo Papatie
 Photo Credit: Sr. S. Jean, M.I.C.



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Two Young Adults and Vatican Council II

This year, the 50th Anniversary of Vatican Council II is highlighted by way of colloquiums, conferences, special events which will be held here and around the world; this historical milestone cannot fall by the wayside, it must be revisited and spoken about. The convocation of that Council by the late Pope John XXIII, which was held in the years 1962-1965, assembling more than 2,500 bishops and world-wide specialists, is nowadays considered by some people as an event of the past.



Renaude Grégoire

interviewed two young adults who are committed to the Church and involved in the society; the questions were about their vision of Vatican II and the impact the Council has had on their lives.

Marco Veilleux is the Jesuit provincial delegate for the social apostolate in French Canada.

Catherine Foisy is a sociologist and a member of the faith/committed group at the Justice and Faith Center in Montreal. She recently finished her doctoral thesis entitled: *"Quebecers at the frontiers of dialogue and cultural confrontation on a global scope; stories of missionaries from Asia, Africa, Latin America (1945-1980)."*

R.G.: Does Vatican II have any meaning to young committed people in your age bracket (25-40 years)?

Catherine: This is a complex question. For some, yes, as long as it corresponds to

the Catholic Church being open to our contemporary world. For others, no!

Marco: Vatican II has fashioned the Church I know and to which I dedicate myself. I was born after Vatican II. One day, I wanted to discover the roots of my commitment. Therefore, to be informed, I decided to read the documents of the Council. I wanted to know 'my origins'. I learned a lot as I also listened to committed people who were adults when the Council took place. For my friends of my generation, the Council has a significant effect and it is a precious source of reference.

R.G.: For those whom the Council has meaning, what aspect do they mainly refer to?

Marco: For many, the document *Gaudium et Spes*¹ which speaks of the church in today's world; this document is often referred to and is the most influential.

For us, the important point is—a spirit of ‘presence in the world’ lived with openness, trust, freedom, and the conviction that the Spirit of God is at work in all things. The world, the cultures, the social debates should not be avoided nor be opposed. God is waiting for us right there and He precedes us. We must be audacious enough to go meet people, to hear the questions and know about world issues; it’s in the midst of our societies that we meet God and within the human experience that we live the Gospel.

Catherine: Among the key teachings of Vatican II, the question of dialogue and commitment as Christians in the world has been a strong element among the young people. The understanding of Mission as intrinsically linked to our Baptism has been retained by many.

R.G.: *How can you explain that such an important historical event remains ignored by some?*

Catherine: We know very little of the heritage left by the Vatican Council II. For many of us, it has not been transmitted in its totality; meanwhile others have experienced it through the practice of liturgy and rituals.

Marco: I think that the younger generations have been immersed in a “social Catholicism” and that is thanks to witnesses, youth movements, and the experience of ‘service’. Others who have endorsed the faith and the Church because of personal piety or some spiritual experience are often unaware of the Council and its impact on the Church. It’s a pity! Personal faith, interiority, spiritual experiences are not to be rejected. However, a faith that is not ‘incarnate’ in the social, political, economical realities of everyday life is not a faith of our great Christian tradition which Vatican II wanted to rediscover. Presently, we are witnessing a tendency—an intimate, comforting, therapeutic faith; unfortunately, that’s the way it seems to stand. It might be a trend...

R.G.: *Has your vision of the Church and your dedication been influenced by Vatican II? If so, can you speak a little about that...*

Marco: The preface of *Gaudium et Spes* states: *The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts...*² Truly, I must say that as I go about my work this is my leitmotif.

Catherine: Yes, Vatican II has taught us the importance of being open to the world, to dialogue with our universal brothers and sisters, to be yeast in the dough that our world may be transformed; the Kingdom of God is here and now.

R.G.: *Do you think Vatican II is still pertinent? If so, for what reasons?*

Catherine: Yes, Vatican II is still pertinent as it reminds us of our responsibilities and calls us to dedication. It reiterates that in our divided world, thirsting for justice and peace, we have a mission to accomplish as baptized Christians.

Marco: A Council is an historical moment which deeply involves our faith tradition, renewing it and giving it a refreshing orientation. We must not turn Vatican II into a “mascot”. Since 1960, the world and the culture have changed; new challenges have come up and new questions have been raised. But the “spirit” of Vatican II will always remain pertinent. It is that “spirit” we must carry on within us and with others as we go about our work. We must be “watchers” observing the “signs of the times” as the late Pope John XXIII invited us to be: such an attitude, such a spiritual disposition will never be outmoded. To discern the work of the Spirit in our world of today, to be a serving and humble Church reaching out to the poor, this is what Vatican II invites us to be and do—it’s a never ending task. ∞

¹ Joy and Hope

² The Documents of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (America Press 1966) 199, no.1

¹ Christian Unity week

² A Church committed to social justice

Photos Credit: R. Grégoire



A Word For Our Time

The Quebec Church is at a turning point. The 'new evangelization' has become a popular expression. But what does it imply? Is it a simple slogan or a real renewal? How can it transform our ways of proposing Jesus Christ? It is urgent to reflect upon the real meaning of such a subject, here and now. What challenges, what conditions, what futuristic path?



Marie-Paule
Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

This past October, the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops took place in Rome. At this assembly, the Bishops questioned themselves on how the Word of God could be presented to our contemporary world. They discerned the changes which affect how we live our faith and which influence our Christian Communities. The Synod was not only a source of encouragement but also the place to compare experiences, share observations on situations and approaches for action.¹

A LANGUAGE FOR ALL

In other words, we must abandon a language that is frozen in time, cut-off from reality in order to give life to the Message of Christ. How many times I have heard people say: *What is the meaning of this homily?* It is not easy for certain people who do not know the Scriptures very well to capture the message and adapt it to their everyday life. Why is it so difficult to apply hermeneutics², or the interpretation of texts? Why not use words that

speak the language of the heart, like Mary, at Cana who simply said: *They have no more wine!* A simple language, direct, filled with compassion; and the people understood... *The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about the present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other.*³ Even after fifty years, our many questions can still find their answers through Vatican Council II.

The message must touch the hearts; it must speak about the daily preoccupations of the time. When we are touched by the trials of life such as suffering, treason, rejection, sickness or death, we need solidarity, understanding and compassion. Only the language of the heart can then touch the person. *We are called to meet the God whom Jesus Christ has revealed to us; even when everything seems to slip through our hands, even when all our calculations and reason-*

¹ The New Evangelization- expectations from the Synod

² A discipline of interpretation theory encompassing all forms of communication: written, verbal and non-verbal

³ Vatican II, *The Church Today*, 201.4

⁴ Cardinal Tauran

⁵ John 20:17

*ing have come to nothing. We must trust that God's hand is always upon us.*⁴

A TEACHING WELL ROOTED

Christ's message is none other than the language of the heart. He had compassion for the blind, the lame and even for those who did not understand. How many times Jesus rebuked his disciples who were slow to understand... He would again resume His teaching sometimes in parables, sometimes through concrete gestures such as healing the sick. Jesus never stopped announcing His message of love, of revealing to us that God is the Father of all.

Today, the church must continue the mission of Christ. His message must be clear and it must respond to the daily pre-occupations of the people. Didn't Christ give us the example? And shouldn't the Church abandon the exclusive language so as to give an egalitarian place to women? Christ Himself entrusted the essential message of His revelation to women: *Go tell my brothers that I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.*⁵ Could there not be a greater place for women in the Church? In a world where there are so many injustices we, as Christians, should prove to have more empathy and refuse this world of violence.

A MISSION FOR ALL

Recently, I attended the Diocesan Order of Merit ceremony in the Diocese of St-Jean-Longueuil. Bishop Lionel Gendron, P.S.S., gave the award to forty people and Sr. Jeanne Vallée, one of our Sisters, was among the group.

These dedicated people, faithfully committed in an area that has particular importance for the Church, respond to the wishes of the Synod because they concretely live out the Word of God. There is a proverb that says: *What you do speaks louder than words*; that is to say, our actions must validate what we say. Often times, generous commitments go unnoticed, but the beneficiaries know very well they have been comforted, supported, helped and that God loves them.

Much could be said about all those volunteers who work relentlessly within the Church. I would like to say a word about Sr. Jeanne Vallée whom I know very well. At the service of the St-Jean-Longueuil Diocese, she coordinates all the pastoral activities of ten parishes and is in direct contact with the parishioners. Her expertise qualifies her in training catechists and to provide follow-up sessions.

Sister Jeanne experiences beautiful moments when she journeys with families who wish to have their children baptized or have them receive their first communion. Everything is new for them; they are very receptive and want to learn for the love of their children. They often become precious collaborators.

Unfortunately, sometimes there are people who turn their backs on the Church because of certain misunderstandings or certain changes which demand adaptation and suppleness. More than ever the Church feels the urgency to act, the urgency to live out by her mission in a credible and pertinent way. It is up to us to uphold her! 

We must abandon a language that is frozen in time in order to give life to the Message of Christ.



¹ Sr. Jeanne Vallée, M.I.C.,
& Bishop L. Gendron

² Recipients of the Order of Merit,
St-Jean-Longueuil

Photos Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.





Sr. Boilard has been impressed by her Taizé experience. She incarnates the ecumenical values of Vatican II—working for peace and being open to other religions. Having lived in Jerusalem for one year, she is currently part-time animator in her community's health care center; she takes part in the ACAT meetings, the Judeo-Christian dialogue, and works in solidarity with the interfaith Greenpeace movement.

Holding an Ecumenical Dream



Pauline Boilard, M.I.C.

¹ www.acatcanada.org

¹ Palestinian couple:
Jamal & Saddiyi Muqbel
with their four children
Photo Credit: MIC

Did you know that when the late Pope John XXIII named Augustin Béa as Cardinal in 1959, he also asked him to cherish an ecumenical dream? Augustin Béa became an ambassador for peace throughout the world. In 1962, he had succeeded in calling upon eighty non-Catholic observers and numerous lay auditors to join the Cardinals of the Universal Church, asking them to participate to an historical event—the second Vatican Council.

The small Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity which was headed by Cardinal Béa, gradually resembled a Conciliar Commission—giving an ecumenical color to the conciliar texts. Was this not characteristic of the Holy Spirit at work? It is precisely this work

that the Church is celebrating this year—the 50th Anniversary of the Council which the late Pope John wanted as a breath of fresh air for the Universal Church.

Today, how do I apply the socio-spiritual ecumenical reality in my missionary commitment? I was not directly called to hold this ecumenical dream; however, I gradually identified this reality in my life. As a missionary, I had many opportunities of meeting diverse people without, at first, identifying their faith background. Then my circle of friends and people around me commented on the matter, making me realize that in my daily life I did have an ecumenical orientation. The following are four situations whereby the practical side of ecumenism meets this dream.

DISCOVERING FROM WITHIN ANOTHER FAITH TRADITION

For the past twelve years, I have been regularly participating in the Judeo-Christian dialogue at the Emanu-El Beth Shalom synagogue in Montreal, Quebec. This activity allows me to know the sentiments and vision of the Jewish thought. To give an example of their perception I will cite the Jewish poet Jacob-Isaac Segal; it is a poem which was translated from Yiddish to French by Pierre Ancil. It illustrates very well the vision which the newly arrived Jewish person had of Montreal in the early 20th century. For all citizens of Quebec it is interesting to discover that Montreal had an important place in the mind of Quebec's oldest minority group.

*In the early hours of the morning
You are aglow, O marvellous city!
Your ceaseless activity is disquieting
And it grows with intensity.*

*From your multiple neighbourhoods
You reveal yourself as great.
Immersed in the enthusiasm of dawn
You become restless and brace up
for the day.*

*O marvellous city, magical city!
You belch out fire, you wear all colors.
The days are consumed like burning coal
Then you fling them out with a crash.*

HUMANITARIAN COMMITMENT WHILE RESPECTING THE LIBERTIES, CULTURES AND RELIGIONS

For almost three years, I have been working with ten or so MIC Sisters participating in the *Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture* (ACAT)¹. As mentioned on their web site, our project consists in: *Giving thanks to the Holy Spirit who works through the audacious faith and perseverant actions of all the ACAT's groups. Included are those who intervene on behalf of the persecuted and tortured as well as those agents who bring about change. Our prayers also uphold all the persons who,*

directly or indirectly watch over the causes of those persecutions.

Our participants are all missionary Sisters; some worked in countries whereby dehumanizing situations are of interest to ACAT. These elderly missionaries cannot return to those countries, but until the very end they want to remain in solidarity with all those who are pursuing this humanitarian mission while respecting the different cultures and religions.

Our group comes together every last Monday of each month. Our purpose is to gather information, to pray, to act. On a regular basis we receive news from the Association; at times we are asked to 'get the word out' about unjust and cruel ways people are being treated; we distribute cards or letters for people to sign in solidarity, denouncing such acts.

A COMMON RESPONSE TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL APPEAL

In connection with the green Churches' program, managed by the Canadian Ecumenical Center, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother House, Montreal, Quebec have concretely committed themselves to an *alliance with creation*. The following lines are a summary of their commitment:

*Benefitting of an environment
which is favourable to contemplation
and where God has placed us to live;
Becoming more aware of the ecological
dimension of our Christian spirituality
which is that of Thanksgiving;
In a spirit of openness and solidarity
together with the interfaith green Churches
we commit ourselves to respect Creation;
Mutually helping each other
in three areas:
spirituality, awareness, action,
so as to improve our practices
in the line of justice
towards Creation and our brothers
and sisters. ♡*



An Unfolding Missionary Journey



In the Fall issue of 2010, Sr. Monette Ouellette, M.I.C., wrote an article about Patsy Morency. She presented us this young woman who audaciously pronounced her perpetual vows on June 6, 2010. The presentation described Patsy's life journey which gradually led her to achieve her missionary dream.

After having celebrated her perpetual commitment, Sr. Patsy was mandated to Peru. She is 35 years of age. Her log book tells us of the many challenges she met along the way and the reality of mission work. Her account shows us a part of the world which seems "unreal" and yet...

By Patsy Morency, M.I.C.



From Peru, this ancestral mystical land, I greet you. This is a corner of the planet where the vastness of creation is conducive to reflection, to awe and wonder, and to gratitude. Unfortunately much work is needed from our hands and hearts to unify our efforts in order to comfort and give bread to those who have less or none at all. I invite you to come with me on this journey to discover a people that I deeply love.

To achieve these intense and unique moments of my religious missionary life,

lived in a society and Church in mutation, the formation road has been long. Together, we will discover God's mysterious and unique loving ways; a God who passionately loves us and guides us in living the unexplainable, unbelievable encounter between cultures that exist under the same sky.

With you I want to share this human experience; together we will discover this "marvelous golden city" *con mucho amor y ternura*, (with lots of love and tenderness).

¹ THE CROSS OF UNITY WITH THE YOUTH AND TEACHERS! (March 31, 2011)

With students from various colleges and religious education teachers, we celebrated the cross of unity... a beautiful experience of togetherness with the whole world... the ceremony was prayerful, lights and chants illuminated the night.

² THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

In a poor and violent neighborhood, an alternative school was set up for the children who could not afford a public school education. To mothers who have families, I gave a workshop on marital violence. I hope to have follow-ups with those who wish to continue their education in that sense and learn how to have a better life... thus giving the children a chance of being in a loving family environment rather than one of violence, solitude and harshness .

³ FUNERALS! THE DESTABILIZING CYCLE OF LIFE (December 23, 2011)

Destabilized in my insecurities once again... Sunday, I was going to say a prayer in a family where a man was seriously ill; the house was located far in the mountains where no medical facilities could be found. However, his daughter knew the usual time my van would be on the road, so she stopped me and asked that I walk with her to the house where the man had already died. From the house we walked to the cemetery for burial... with the villagers I participated in the funeral... there's no funeral parlor, no chapel... I must admit I am shattered and I would like to offer my place to someone else... but if I do not go along, no one will accompany this poor, grieving family. Moreover, it is a sad story: the father never forgave his daughter and he always rejected her... will she ever find serenity one day? May the Holy Spirit guide my words of comfort and support.

⁴ SHARING AT CHRISTMAS (December 2011)

Emotions! Emotions! This morning, I discovered a small primary school of seventy five students which was only thirty minutes away from where I live. They have no electricity, no drinking water. With a hospital staff we distributed small, very small gifts; we also had hot chocolate and cake for them. The four teachers told us that it is only the second time this year the children welcome visitors because of the bad roads and the location—remote mountainous region. It was the first time in their life that these little ones received a gift, many of them did not know what a doll was and had never seen a mini plastic truck... A special prayerful thought for all those children who have no childhood years. And even the parents are happy to receive a little gift.

⁵ GODMOTHER...

Here, a lady asked me to be her Godmother but I could not really understand. I decided to follow her without knowing what to expect; I finally realized that there is a tradition here which consists in throwing one's self at the feet of Christ and another person is appointed to lift her from the ground, hold her hand and light a candle; somewhat like a new birth. It's beautiful and meaningful.

Sometimes the road is more difficult than other days, sometimes there is a sensation of not doing enough..., of searching for results..., but this evening I visited a teacher by the name of Beto who paralyzed last September. I brought him some clay that he could work with to help the muscles of his hands...; fun for children but also fun for the adults that we are. A simple pleasure of the moment, colored with joy, laughter and friendship for the person who lives and struggles through a difficult situation. Perhaps my role is simply to be present and attentive rather than doing... I continue pondering on this! ☞



Photos Credit: MIC

« Maché pou lavi! »

Walking the Walk of Life!



At the MIC Community of Cap-Haitien, Haiti, women come regularly at the Aid Center to ask for some help: work, food, money so as to provide for their family...



Gisèle Vachon, M.I.C.

When they arrive, we study their living conditions which is one of humility and of dependence: they feel underprivileged as they are unable to take care of their children. At first, we suggest that they go to St-Vincent-de-Paul at our Cap-Haitian parish. Members of this organization have the responsibility of visiting all the families in distress and help them as they see fit. Unfortunately, they told me that the organization is itself in trouble.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Time and time again, the people of the Diocese of Chicoutimi have been extremely generous towards the Haitian nation. Since I am originally from that Diocese, we decided to ask their help once more and my parish accepted. Thanks for the amount received, St-Vincent-de-Paul was able to rescue ten families by offering them each 300-500\$H (equivalent to 50-90 Canadian dollars). This amount allowed some women to begin a small business which is an honorable way of earning a bit of money and provide for their families' basic needs.

Before receiving their amount, the recipients were given information on how St-Vincent-de-Paul operates: First, a member visits the families and determines what amount is needed for their livelihood. Then, according to the principles of CARITAS, the organization favors acts of solidarity whereby the beneficiaries are capable of eventually looking after themselves. Therefore, after three months, each beneficiary must give back one tenth of her earnings before receiving another amount.

COURAGEOUS WOMEN

Here is the story of four women, winners of "WALKING THE WALK OF LIFE". It's October and classes have resumed. **Mrs. Osias**, widow since four years, has six children. The eldest, 19 years of age, worked at Port-au-Prince as a household servant. Another girl was placed in the care of a lady at Cap-Haitien. Mrs. Osias had to provide for the other four children between the ages five to thirteen; they all attend school. She chose to begin a small business—selling rock salt. She

carries on her head a large woven bamboo basket filled with this rock salt and walks to the market-place. The sale gives her enough revenue to pay the one-tenth to St-Vincent-de-Paul plus is able to buy food for the family. In January 2010, in the wake of the devastating earthquake, her eldest daughter was saved by the family for whom she was working; however, she was seriously injured. She came back home and had to have the fingers of her right hand amputated. She died a week later. Her mother received help for the funeral, but her small savings were all spent. St-Vincent-de-Paul refunded her business; now, she rents a wheelbarrow at 10\$ H (1.50\$ Canadian) per week; in a small boat she crosses over to Cap-Haitien and sells her sea salt at the market-place. Up to now she manages fairly well, thanks to her courage, her trust in God and in the Virgin Mary to whom the whole family fervently prays.

Yola is in charge of ten persons: she has six children and her older sister, mentally handicapped has two children of her own, they all stay with Yola. Each month, she has to travel three hours from Cap-Haitien to reach a village where she consults a psychiatrist and renew the needed medication for her sister. Last February, at a day center, Yola met her neighbor who had taken in Blandine, a young orphan who had come from Port-au-Prince after the earthquake. Yola took time to show them around the city and accepted that the child sleep at her house for one night. However, the charitable neighbor never showed up, and little Blandine found her new place in Yola's family. Yola's shoe business gives her the courage to keep-on notwithstanding the many difficulties she encounters.

Every morning, **Remise** and **Rosemène** gather their merchandise consisting of assorted toilet articles; they walk to the market place to sell whatever they have. This work gives them a sense of worth because they feel they are autonomous and can provide for their families. The MIC fraternity helps, in particular, Rosemène's twins, the two last born who are now in grade one; the annual cost is 800\$H each (100\$ Canadian).

¹ Remise and Rosemène at the market place

² Crossing the river to go to Cap-Haitien

Photos Credit: G. Vachon, M.I.C.

Who gives to the poor, lends to God!

One evening, I received an E-mail from an MIC in Canada—*The World seen from Rome*. One of the texts entitled "The Welcome of Immigrants" spoke about the 'host culture'—inviting all Christians to provide the newcomers with pastoral care, charitable assistance, ensuring the just treatment and protecting their human dignity. Indeed, our Church is one of communion!

On behalf of all those brave women, we thank all the people who are aware of the needs of others and by their offerings, gifts, donations, help the most unfortunate giving them the courage to keep walking the walk of life. The women of Haiti want to be self-supporting, they want to look after themselves and their families within a collective responsibility; thus, they look at life with more confidence and they do believe in the future.

"Who gives to the poor, lends to God!" Proverbs 19:17

2



Dawn Of A New Life

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



Teresita Canivel, M.I.C. (Sr. Marie-Teresita) 1929-2012, Candaba, Pampanga, Philippines

"A true leader for Christ" this has been Sr. Teresita's life; she inherited a profound faith from her devout Catholic family. Endowed with a brilliant mind, she succeeded well in all her undertakings. On May 14, 1960, Teresita entered the MIC Novitiate. Along the years, she taught, directed schools, initiated construction projects while managing the finance and development department of the Immaculate Conception Academy in Greenhills, Manila. The eulogy at her funeral described our Sister very well: "Her charm, her charism, her warm personality, her sincerity and magical comforting attitude won all hearts." Sr. Teresita, thank you and Magnificat.



Primitiva Panesa, M.I.C. (Sr. Maurice-de-Jésus) 1929-2012, Jaro, Iloilo, Philippines

She was the first MIC Sister from the Philippines. Primitiva was the youngest of nine siblings. From her early childhood years she excelled in sports; this led her to gain scholarships for further studies. At the end of her high-school and college years she specialized in education. She taught in MIC schools in Mati, Davao Oriental. Disturbed by the poor situation of the natives "Mandayas" and "Moros", Primitiva opted for the missionary life and came to Pont-Viau in 1954 for her Novitiate. Always ready to serve, she accepted the direction of various works. We find a reflection of her missionary experiences in her writings: *The Challenge to be a Messenger of God's Word and Superstar for the Lord*.



Pauline Noël, M.I.C. (Sr. Saint-Guy) 1922-2012, Rimouski, QC

Pauline was born in a family of deep faith. Prematurely she knew what she wanted in life: at seven, she said she would be a nun and at nine, a missionary. Her experiences in the J.É.C. movement and working for an insurance company molded her virtuous character. At the age of 23 she entered the Novitiate at Pont-Viau. Her missionary route began with studies in Rome and a mission experience in Madagascar in the year 1971. In the Province of Quebec she was committed to mission awareness, teaching, and to the service of authority. During the last years of her life she excelled in stitching Christmas cribs, an attraction for all to see. Sr. Pauline, thank you!



Teresa Fung, M.I.C. (Sr. Teresa-Marie) 1915-2012, Canton, China

Teresa Fung Souk Tching grew up in an exceptional environment. Though her parents were Taoists, she became a member of the United Church. Fascinated by the Holy Spirit Catholic School, directed by the MIC Sisters in Canton, China, she asked to be baptized Catholic. As a young adult she opted for celibacy in order to accompany her parents in their old age years. Later, with the consent of her parents, she left China for Vancouver, B.C. There, she worked among the Chinese immigrants as interpreter, catechist, health-care aid, cook, housekeeper, bookkeeper. On February 1, 1940, she entered the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception; her outreach, zeal and love for the Chinese immigrants never faltered. God bless you Sr. Teresa!



Yvette Hervieux, M.I.C. (Sr. Joseph-de-l'Espérance) 1922-2012, Lanoraie, Quebec

"When we have but love...breaking out in joy, every hour and every day..." (Brel); these words depict very well Sr. Yvette. She received much love in her family and in turn she gave much love to all the people she came across in Quebec as well as in Malawi and Zambia. Sister had many talents. Her well seasoned cooking became popular and appreciated. Her safe driving on dangerous washboard roads in Africa was considered as 'Providential' in many of the outposts. Sr. Yvette excelled in cultivating citrus trees, in sewing and in the making of communion wafers for the diocese where she worked. Sr. Yvette, yours are five golden stars and Magnificat for your great work.

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O Great Spirit!

O Great Spirit, whose voice
I hear in the winds,
and whose breath gives life
to the universe,
listen to me.
I am your child I need to know
your love.

Let me walk in beauty
and let my eyes be always amazed
by the red and purple sunsets.
Make my hand respect the things
you have made
and my ears be attentive
to your voice.

O Great Spirit, give me wisdom
so that
I can understand what
you teach us.
Let me learn the lessons you hide
under leaves and stones.

I seek strength not to dominate
my brothers,
but to fight my greatest enemy,
myself.
Make sure that I am always ready
to come to you with clean hands
and clear eyes.

O Great Spirit, when life
will leave me,
as the sun drops to the horizon,
may my soul come to you
without any remorse.



Painting: Kateri Tekakwitha, Artist: Denise Lemelin, 1980, Jesuit Archives