

MIC MISSION NEWS

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To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

CANADA

THE SACRED JOURNEY

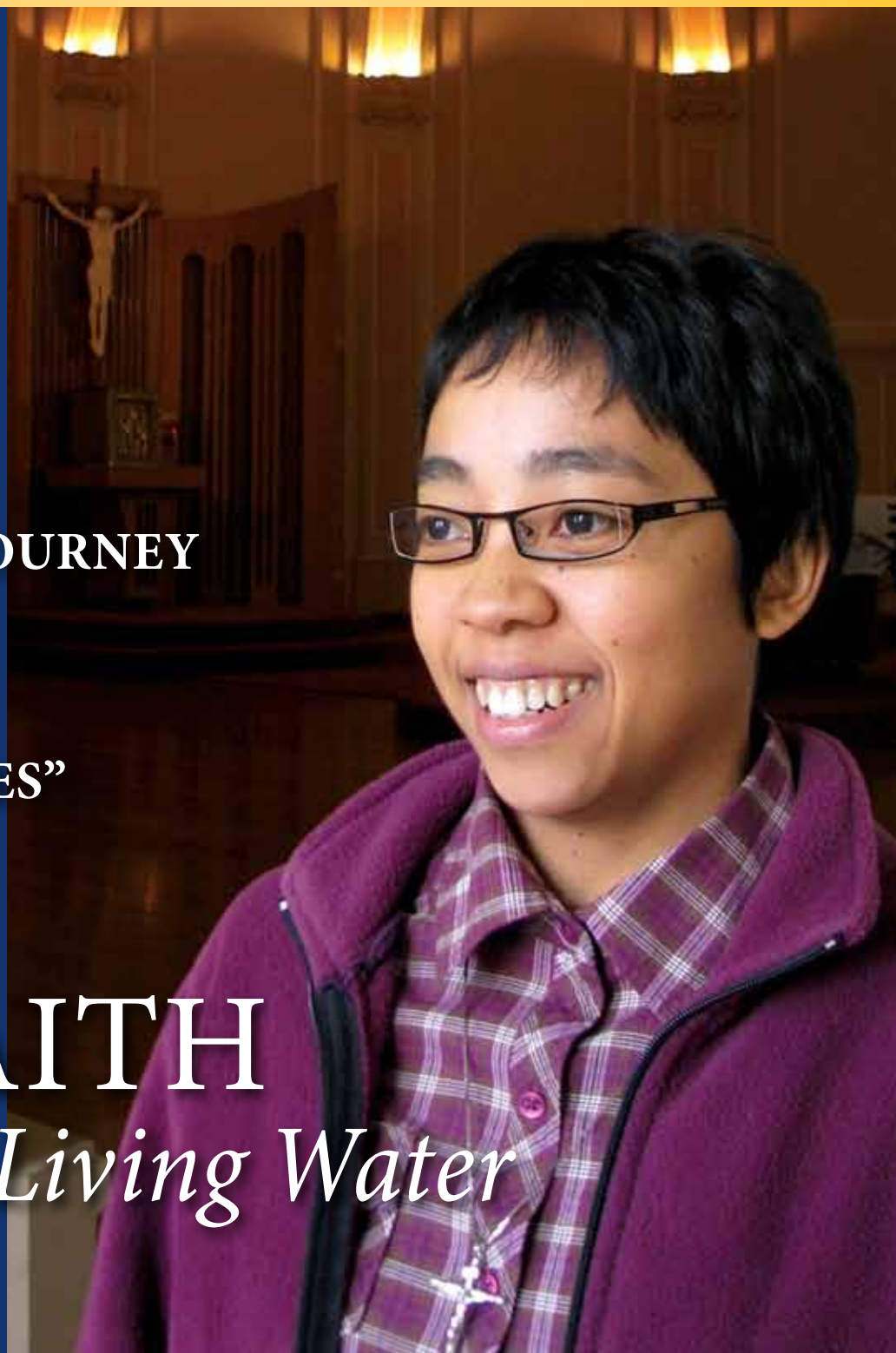
MADAGASCAR

WHY I SAID “YES”

IN FOCUS

MY FAITH

—As the Living Water



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2013

JANUARY

FOR THE MIDDLE EAST — *We pray that the Christian communities of the Middle East, often discriminated against, may receive from the Holy Spirit the strength of fidelity and perseverance.*

FEBRUARY

FOR THE PEOPLE IN CONFLICT — *We pray that the peoples at war and in conflict may lead the way in building a peaceful future.*

MARCH

FOR THE CLERGY — *We pray that all bishops, priests, and deacons may be tireless messengers of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.*

MASSES FOR READERS' INTENTIONS OFFERED IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

January: *Canada*

February: *Cuba*

March: *Philippines*

April: *Haiti*

May: *Canada*

June: *Bolivia*

July: *Malawi and Zambia*

August: *Hong Kong and Taiwan*

September: *Madagascar*

October: *Peru*

November: *Japan*

December: *Canada*



CONTENTS

VOL. 40, No 1 | JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH 2013

COLUMNS

SPIRITUAL LIFE

4 The Sacred Journey — *André Gadbois*

CULTURES AND MISSION

6 The Bread of Fellowship — *Jacqueline Brage, M.I.C.*

YOUTH

8 Transmitting the Faith—Three Generations — *Suzanne Lachapelle*

ECOLOGY

10 Ecological EYE-OPENER — *Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.*

IN FOCUS

MY FAITH: AS THE LIVING WATER

12 Why I Said “Yes” — *Nadya Rakotonirina, M.I.C.*

14 Vocation—A Prevalent Question — *Thérèse Chabot, M.I.C.*

16 Faith: “A Tiny Bud of Hope” — *Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.*

ABOUT THE MICs

18 Missionary Dynamism
— *In collaboration: MIC Website Team*

20 A Family Trait — *Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.*

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EDITORIAL

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

Mother Délia consecrated her life that the faith be within the reach of everyone and transmitted to those who do not know Jesus Christ.

To fill ourselves with Jesus and Mary so as to later share of our superabundance... what an apostolate! Beseech of Our Lord that they (the missionaries) sow seeds of living faith, of love of God and of the Church. (Autumn 1916)

Let us do everything in a spirit of faith. Yes, let us see God in everything. (January 23, 1918)

You need to ask for the spirit of faith. If we had a more supernatural spirit, we would judge things differently than we do... We would experience contentment in the service of God and give this feeling to others. (November 27, 1921)

Do the little you can, God will do the rest; the spirit of faith has to be strengthened in you. (February 5, 1922)

Where is your spirit of faith? Is it more difficult for God to provide us the means to pay the big debts as it is to pay the small debts? (September 30, 1925)

Apply yourself in seeing God in all creatures, in nature, in events so as to glorify Him, bless Him, and thank Him. (March 9, 1925)

Faith—at a Turning Point

Since infancy we have taken our faith for granted; all through our growing-up years, it was a peaceful part of us. Today, it is different. We live in a multi-confessional society and we are confronted with issues that did not exist before. Questions abound: What is my faith all about? What is the basis of my belief? In whom do I believe? This year, Pope Benedict XVI proposes we take an invigorating halt to look deeper into our Christian faith. This is a grace-filled opportunity; the true Living Water is beckoning us.

Believe! It's an everyday challenge. In the Scriptures we read: *Happy are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*¹ This is a beatitude calling us to trust, to transcend rationalism. Faith is nothing less than a loving encounter with Christ who opens our eyes to discover Him in the eyes of the other. It's a transformative encounter that goes as far as giving one's self to the Lover.

Precisely, many young people from around the world respond to the Lord's call—they consecrate their lives to Christ. They become witnesses of their faith in a world that needs a new evangelization. Notwithstanding the obstacles that may come their way such as being ridiculed, laughed at, even being misunderstood they dare consecrate themselves to Christ because of their deep convictions and faith in Him.

We are all called, one way or another, to be witnesses of hope that offers the Living Water to all those whose hearts thirst for conversion. Doubts and trials can weigh heavily upon us, but our leitmotif *I know in whom I put my trust* upholds our efforts and our good will. Christ will always be present among us and together we can be witnesses of a living faith. The Source of the Living Water never runs dry; it is always there to revive us. *Give me this living water*² the Samaritan woman asked Jesus... May our prayer today be: *Intensify my faith, O Lord!*

I hope that the articles in this issue will inspire us and lead us to reflect, to deepen our belief in a loving God, and urge us to be witnesses of our faith.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

¹ Jn 20:29

² Jn 4:15

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The Sacred Journey

Proposing the Faith as indicated in Scripture invites us all to ‘let go’ of our pretentious knowledge of the Truth and join those who suffer and work for the happiness of Humanity.



André Gadbois

There was a time in Quebec, Canada, when the Catholic faith was automatically part of our heritage just as is our maternal language. On both sides of the Saint-Lawrence River, every newborn baby was baptized—holy water was poured over each child’s forehead. The family rejoiced and the village church bells rang out joyfully as a new member was welcomed into the Church. Subsequently, the Catholic environment in which the child grew up was instrumental in his religious upbringing. Nowadays, as much as water is in peril, so is the Catholic religion struggling to survive within a secular society. I personally have no regret, nor shame of having been baptized and I thank all the people who taught me about

life—a life which is not static but rather keeps changing and is transitional. Thanks to all those individuals, I was able to ask the necessary questions and to acquire a *sharpened vision in order to recognize the Spirit of God that pervades everything.*¹ Teilhard de Chardin once wrote: *We must be rid of the Manichean prejudice that tends to set God and the world, love of God and love of the world in opposition. Going to the world and loving it, we go to God and love Him. The world leads us to God.*²

Christian faith consists in recognizing in our streets and in our world the Divine Touch of the Resurrected Christ. His presence is all around us, and like Him we must be Good News to the poor. In a world where the human being is often

treated as merchandise, the faith of all those who believe in Jesus must reveal His Message and support those who are working towards a more humane society. In this day and age the liturgy, the temples, the restrictions have very little weight, very little importance. However, the everyday virtues of kindness, tenderness, thoughtfulness remain a mystery for many. In his letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul said: *If I have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal* (1 Cor. 13:1).

GOD IS A STEP AHEAD OF THE CHURCH

It is not in our power to instill the faith, but it is in our power to make it possible, to facilitate its growth by eliminating all obstacles. Nowadays, faith comes alive when a heart has been moved by the kindness of a stranger—somewhat like the disciples of Emmaus, or the Samaritan at the well, or Nicodemus who wanted to know more about this life giving Jesus. God is always a step ahead of us because He dwells in the heart of each person. It is up to all of us, who are in need of transcendence, to eliminate the obstacles that prevent us from the great encounter with HIM. It is up to us to walk the journey with Jesus, to be inspired by His words and deeds. Discreetly we can perform good works and sow seeds of tenderness, generosity, equality, mercy and loving care.

In His time, Jesus appeared as a wandering preacher going from village to village, mostly in Galilee. He observed His contemporaries to whom He announced the Good News. Taken by surprise, the people surrounding Him reacted differently and sought to know more: *Who are you? Where do you come from? From whom did you receive such authority?* Many questions were in the minds of His listeners. One day, on the mountain, Jesus spoke to a crowd of people who had gathered around Him, He resumed His thought: *I have seen some of you forgive your neighbor without shouting about it everywhere; some of you have compassionately helped a stranger in his suffering and pain; I have seen others defending children who are ridiculed*

or despised; others have come to the rescue of the destitute and were injured because of their involvement,... To each one, I say: Continue-on as you are fulfilling the project of the One who sent me (Mt. 5). The authorities of the time considered Jesus as a dissident, but the One who sent Him, elevated Him. God's life-giving Breath is given to all Humanity that it may not drift away from its ultimate goal.

¹ <http://www.jesuites.be/conference du Père André Fossion.html> (P. 4, 2.1- April 2012)

² FRENAUD, Dom Georges, *The Philosophical and Religious Thought of Teilhard de Chardin* (1A)

Discreetly we can
perform good works.



SAINT JOHN'S TEXT —A CALL TO CONVERSION

There are many roads that lead to the Eternal. In Matthew 25: 31.46 we are given many examples to which the King replies: *'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me...'* To facilitate and make possible this encounter, we must let go of our long-standing reflex of being transmitters of the faith and be converted by Saint John's text: *Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet* (Jn 13: 1.20). Out on the street, outside the Temple area, there are many individuals, though not necessarily of the Catholic faith, who give their life, their time and energies for the welfare of the downtrodden. More than ever, we are called to show them our support, engage with them our hope and be a response to their faith-filled questions because God is with ALL his beloved children. Unfortunately, in the past, our uncompromising and imperialistic Institution led us adrift; we must now recognize and acknowledge that this has been. We are called to repentance and reparation; we are called to work alongside those who are putting into practice the Gospel of service. ☺

The Bread of Fellowship

Originally from Cuba, Sr. Jacqueline is involved in promoting the Church's missionary dimension in Mother Délia Tétreault's country, here in Quebec, Canada. She considers herself privileged to be able to share her faith with the large MIC family and with people from different nations, especially those from Latin America.

By Jacqueline Brage, M.I.C.



My pastoral work with young adults, teenagers, and the newly arrived immigrants prompts me to find the best ways to engage all those various groups living in Quebec. Opportunities are many; recently I assisted a celebration—*Feast of the Nations* which took place at St. Henri Parish in Mascouche, Quebec. This annual missionary feast, inspired by the Spirit, was most significant for all those present. It rekindled the joy of being together as a great family; besides, with this year's focus on the New Evangelization, the gathering was even more meaningful.

The New Evangelization is the universal Church's priority. We are invited to take an in-depth look at its meaning and to find means in making it come alive in our world. But what exactly do we mean by New Evangelization?

To me, it's a new approach in renewing our relationship with Jesus Christ, it is a way of being attentive to the signs that He presents to us in our everyday life. We must seek to discover the message often hidden in the daily events. With confidence, we must respond to God's calling with the certainty that He is present in our midst. Does He not reveal Himself when we reach out to help others and personally take time for reflection? His Light illumines our minds and we become aware of our own reality and that of our

surroundings; thus our mission is clear and projected for our time. Let us not fear to change our old ways of doing and open our spirit to newness and diversity.

To Go Further

Recently, I attended a funeral at St. Henri's Church, Mascouche, Qc.—while there, a flyer printed in Spanish caught my attention. It indicated that in the parish there was a contemplative prayer group; the name of the person in charge was mentioned. Shortly thereafter, I communicated with Mrs. Sarmiento who invited me to the *Feast of the Nations*. There are numerous new comers in the Mascouche region. The goal of the Feast is to help people discover the richness of the diverse cultures, break down the barriers as well as the prejudices. Sincere and authentic interpersonal relations are established and inspire people to go further. This annual get-together produces beautiful results of solidarity. In order to keep this feast alive, the parish offers a calendar indicating the date of the next feast.

The Eucharistic celebration prepared for this occasion was imbued of an ecumenical spirit. At the entrance of the Church, each person was welcomed wholeheartedly. During the ceremony, representatives from each country dressed in their traditional costume walked up to

the world map and inserted the flag of their native country. The priest mentioned the continents: Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. At the end when he mentioned Quebec, the whole assembly stood up and applauded for five minutes. It was the most touching moment and I could not prevent my tears from welling up because for me it expressed the gratitude of all those immigrants toward their host country, a country which supports them during their long period of adaptation and integration.

In the Cuban culture, gratitude is a key characteristic. I was therefore united with the crowd during that emotional moment, full of spontaneous gratitude. I thought to myself: *This is what the Christian life is all about and I am a witness.*

The Bread of Fellowship

The universal prayer was expressed in sixteen languages. It resounded like a persistent cry pleading the Lord to hear and answer our prayers at all costs. At communion, the priest, Father Éric Généreux, invited all the people of different religions to come take the bread of fellowship from the basket; the Catholics received the Eucharistic bread. Through this welcoming gesture full of tenderness and love Jesus was present and invited us to love each other as brothers and sisters. Without any exception, the Lord welcomes us all into God's family; here we find the joy of being united and of forgiving each other. Blessed is this priest to whom the Lord gave a universal pastoral heart.

After Mass, we were all invited to take part in a buffet—*Buffet of the Nations*. There were twenty-five kiosks set-up all around the church's ground. Behind the kiosks, volunteers joyfully served their national food well seasoned in their own fashion. There was an atmosphere of marvelous collaboration, friendship and love; it was tangible!

After lunch, there were activities for children and adults; there were also folk dances from all parts of the world.

Everybody rejoiced, it was a time of elation.

Let us thank the Creator for the gift of Christian faith which gathers us under the same banner as one People. May His Holy Spirit keep us awake, alert and full of gratitude that we may go, communicate this Good News to all the nations; we must not miss out on these precious moments. Let us give thanks to our God who is the Author of all good things. ∞

Father Éric Généreux, Pastor of the Parish with his parishioners

Photo Credit:

J.de Medeiros Melo



Transmitting the faith—three generations

How are the faith and the Christian values transmitted from one generation to the other? What are their respective characteristics? This article found its inspiration largely from an excellent book: “Le défi des générations”/Faith Through the Generations—A Challenge!¹

By Suzanne Lachapelle

THE SEVENTY YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

For the generation that is seventy years of age and older, religion was part and parcel of everyday life: the family, the school, the hospital. At home, the family prayed the rosary (often the grandmother gathered everyone for this devotion), at school, we studied and memorized the catechism. Transmitting the faith, the values and beliefs, was automatic. Few people would question the order of things or the roles of each one. We attended the religious ceremonies: church processions, vespers, liturgical feasts such as Christmas and Easter; we followed the example of our parents. It was a traditional society which transmitted the values of duty, family, obedience, work and religion. The role of each generation was clear: the parents educated the children and the latter could not say much, they simply obeyed. We can now wonder—was this faith imposed, or freely chosen? We can ask ourselves this question.

THE BABY BOOMERS

The next generation, the baby boomers, blew up that model. Though many were brought up in the Catholic faith, went to Church at least when they were young, received a certain degree of Catholic education at school, and had a certain amount of religious heritage, baby boomers grew up at a time of dramatic social change. Therefore, this generation challenged the established order and its sexual norms. Many left the home nest and went to unknown places with the

idea of living a different kind of life in terms of their profession, their work and eventually of having a family and spiritual life other than their parents had modeled. Having rejected the Catholic morality and its dogmas, the boomers’ spirituality is focused on interiority and their values evolve around: quality of life – well being – health/physical fitness – pacifism – ethics – ecology. However, numerous are the ones who are going through a crisis in their beliefs. Having reached midlife, they are now reflecting. They reached their goal but at what price?

UNDER FORTY YEARS OF AGE

This group has had very little or perhaps no contact at all with religion. They live in a complex and changing world. Less idealistic than the boomers who wanted to change the world, they are more pragmatic. Their trust in the adults is shattered because of the many problems that persist: unemployment, pollution, HIV/AIDS. They have not seen their parents practice their religion nor speak about it. At school there is no religious education; therefore, they have no knowledge of the Scriptures, the Gospels, they don’t know how to pray, they are unaware of their religious historical background except if they personally searched for it. They are focused on ‘short term’ involvement. Their values are: respect, autonomy, sharing, and fundamental rights. Often these young adults *discover Christ and the Gospel via (...) an altruistic commitment, a youth movement where they learn to excel personally and communally.*²



Nicole Loranger, AsMIC,
her daughter and grandchildren,
July 2010

Photo Credit: Roger Caron,
her spouse, AsMIC

All these changes in the life of a society can explain why transmitting cherished values has faded away. But we must keep in mind two other key factors: egalitarian utopia and the compartmentalization of generations.

EGALITARIAN UTOPIA

As of the nineteen sixties, youthfulness has become the main attraction, the value of all time. We have pushed aside the value of maturity thus omitting its worth. The adults align themselves with the youth. Authority and education are perturbed. Parents have decided to be their children's buddies thus neglecting their role as parents. All issues are negotiated. There is an allergy to all forms of wholesome authority—at work as well as in the educational and spiritual spheres. We want no more guides, we reject everything and experience is no longer valuable nor is the memory. *Differences in roles, status, social classes must disappear*³. Henceforth, the lauded values will be centered on: innovation, spontaneity, emotion, and expression. However, the reverse side of this will be avoiding responsibilities, refusing long-term commitments, and exacerbating the ego.

COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF GENERATIONS

Nowadays, the generations live in isolation. We no longer live two or three generations under the same roof. True sharing and genuine dialogue between the generations are few. In fact they are rather superficial; the grandchildren come visit their grandparents at Christmas for the gifts they will receive. Many elderly agree they feel good when they are among themselves while the young people seek out their peers for advice rather than those of family members. Differences in roles and generations are denied. Certain parents no longer dare give advice to their children in fear of being told that the issue is none of their business.

Though it is being criticized, the family remains a strong value for all. Projects must be created to help build bridges between the generations so that a valuable sense to life may emerge. Without guidance and in the turmoil of all those new 'in-style' beliefs, which sometimes are counter to common sense, there is no doubt that the wisdom of the older generations can enrich those who are willing to attentively listen to them. ∞

¹ Grand'Maison Jacques, Baroni Lise, Gauthier Jean-Marc. *Le défi des générations*, Fides 1995.

² Ibid, p. 107

³ Ibid, p. 132

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Suzanne Lachapelle has a Bachelor degree in translation. She revises the French texts for *Le Précurseur* and also edits articles. Suzanne takes great interest in History and in societal issues.

ECOLOGICAL EYE-OPENER!

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

TO FIND OUT MORE:

Ecology and Ignatian Spirituality

Photo Credit: M. Tousignant

Ecology captures our attention and leads us to renew our vision of the world. The human environment includes the entire earth with its diverse ecological systems; therefore, ecology makes us aware of the fragile interdependence between the natural world and human beings. It obliges us to adopt a critical attitude toward our devastating ways of doing things.

Ecology scrutinizes the human practices and brings to light the activities that have negative environmental effects. The probing look is engaged in awakening the attention of the human interlocutor who asks: Is it too late...? Is this inquisitive look pessimistic? No, it is rather a warning, because it is never too late to improve our ways of doing.

TOWARDS A GREEN PLANET

This year, in our magazine, a specific ecological objective will be presented quarterly. An invitation is launched to be good stewards of our natural resources. From January to March 2013, our goal is to reduce water consumption by using it wisely.

The poster encourages us to take 'concrete action' to attain the desired result. Every three months, we will climb a step higher toward our ecological center to contemplate a gleaming healthy planet, thanks to the daily application of our 'concrete action'.

WATER: A RESOURCE WE MUST PROTECT

Researchers tell us that 97.5% of all the water on Earth is salt water, leaving only 2.5% as freshwater. On a smaller scale, let us consider the Quebec territory; freshwater covers 10% of its land. With 4,500 rivers and half a million lakes, Quebec holds 3% of Earth's renewable freshwater reserves and 40% of all this water is concentrated in the St. Lawrence River watershed.

This is a great privilege and it comes with the great responsibility of doing our best to preserve this collective wealth. No matter where we live on planet Earth, we are duty-bound to act as good custodians of freshwater.

What 'concrete action' will I take to protect our freshwater? ☺



Ravaka Razafindahy, M.I.C. and Christine Rasoarimalala, M.I.C. Photo Credit: MIC

MY FAITH

—As the Living Water

Abraham's Lineage

One day, God said to Abraham: *Leave your country, go to the land I will show you* (Gen. 12:1). In faith he departed and this was the origin of God's people. The request was rather strange; however, Abraham left and became the father of a multitude. Since that day, many young people as well as adults have heard the call: *Follow me, leave behind all you have and I will show you my mission.*

Up to this day, Christ continues calling. But, many hesitate following the Lord on the road of obedience, poverty and chastity because the easy life, the choice of careers, the many crossroads proposed to fulfill the most unusual dreams, are glamorous attractions.

Is it not outdated nowadays to leave behind everything we have so as to embrace a demanding mode of life? Well, no! There are still young people who wish to live as apostles of Christ and desire to continue His mission here on earth. The Lord needs each one of us to reach out, to listen to the joys and hopes of peoples, to love and to take part in humanity's vision.

As in the time of Abraham, there are still young people who dare leave all behind and respond to the call. Without setting any limits they journey-on; is this not an authentic way of witnessing a living faith?



Why I Said “YES”



A native of Madagascar, Sister Nadya arrived in Montreal in July 2012 for a stay of two years. Young, dynamic and enthusiastic, Sister is here to learn more about the Foundress of the MIC Community and to be imbued of her spirit. Currently, she is working for the Cause of Délia Tétreault. Sister Nadya tells us about the path which led her to become a religious.

By Nadya Rakotonirina, M.I.C.

LEARNING TO PRAY

At a very young age my parents taught me how to pray. My three brothers and I were taught by our mother the way to make the sign of the cross. Later, we learned how to pray before and after the meals, then came the “Our Father” followed by the “Hail Mary”. At the time I did not understand the meaning of those prayers, but every evening we prayed together and our mother would tell us that God hears the prayers of children. I firmly believed that. As a teen ager I encountered a difficulty; my grandmother took that opportunity to explain to me the benefits of saying the rosary. From that moment on, I entrusted my studies and my difficulties to Mary.

CHOOSING A CAREER

After my studies in computer science, I began thinking of my future. Up until then I wanted to get married. I refused all thoughts of becoming a nun. However, with time I understood that the ideal man I was looking for was Jesus. I started thinking about my mother’s reaction

should I tell her about my questioning; we were very close and I was the only daughter. I kept asking myself many questions because I had no idea what religious life was all about. Being a city girl, could I adapt to a new way of life? I didn’t even know how to cook.

FIRST CONTACT WITH THE MIC SISTERS

I had worked hard to receive my diploma in computer science. Now, the question was: what path must I choose? To help me take the right decision I consulted a man of God. He gave me a bunch of brochures and invited me to pray more about my vocation. As I walked away, I was confused; which of these brochures should I begin reading? Well, I read them all! The MIC pamphlet attracted my attention: *God gave us everything, even His own Son; what better way to repay Him than to give Him children, chosen ones, who will sing His goodness for centuries to come.* But I didn’t know any of these nuns. One day, while I was alone at home, I looked in the phone book, located the MIC Sisters and took an appointment with the Sister in charge of the aspirants. The fact that I found the right person immediately was for me a sign, a call to discernment in Faith. Up

until then, I had been like Thomas, uncertain and asking for tangible signs. Finally, I decided to join the MIC Community.

CONFIRMED IN HAVING TAKEN THE RIGHT DECISION

For a period of six years my relationship with my mother was difficult as she did not understand my decision; however, my father understood and accepted. In silence, many were my personal encounters with the Lord before the tabernacle. There, I met Jesus the Son of Man; contemplating the freedom and transparency of His actions was for me discovering the mystery of His person and His boundless love for all. There, I met a loving God who gives me everything, even His own Son; the Son whom He cherished. The depth of His Love went as far as accepting betrayal, insults, crucifixion and death on a cross for me and for all those who believe in Him. Wanting to express my gratitude, I willingly gave myself to Him. Folly! —you might think; in any case it has radically changed me. And believe me the day I took my first vows, my mother was in tears: she had understood that I had chosen the right path. She could see my very deep happiness; she observed the joyfulness and radiance of those other young women who were with me. I am sure of one thing: I said “yes” to Jesus and my family members are also missionaries in their own way. Isn’t this wonderful?

WORKING IN MADAGASCAR

During a period of five years, I worked in the field of education at Tsaramasay, Ambohibary and Morondava in Madagascar. At Ambohibary, besides teaching I was also co-responsible for rice-growing and did accounting work. Of course, it was not always easy, there were ups and downs. I experienced the dark night of the soul; however, I had marvelous companions who journeyed spiritually with me and the Lord saved me.

ARRIVAL IN CANADA

A few months ago, I arrived at Pont-Viau, in Quebec, Canada. I joined the MIC team who works for the Cause of



Délia Tétreault and I also do promotion work for our magazine *Le Précurseur* (French edition of MIC Mission News). I marvel before the beauty of nature and the warm heartedness of the Quebecers. Sharing is punctuated with friendliness, simplicity, openness, participation, flexibility and cooperation.

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

I must acknowledge that all I have received and have become spring not only from my own strength or will power but also from having been blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I continue sharing my life with Jesus and entrust into His Hands all my deep aspirations, challenges, shared joys, prayer intentions of other people... My heart to heart with Jesus brings me peace, I feel confident, enthused and happy—somehow I am energized and ready to receive the gifts life has to offer me. Meeting with people, I continue my work with joy. It is with the MIC Sisters that I, as a Madagascan, live fully with a sense of pride in the spirit of Thanksgiving. I believe this to be the power of Faith.

THE YEAR OF FAITH

This year has been proclaimed the *Year of Faith*. I truly wish that in your lifetime you discover and meet the Man called Jesus Christ. *May our life be a perpetual hymn of Thanksgiving in gratitude to the One from whom we have received every good thing.* ∞

¹ Missionary Send-off – Blessing by Father P. Vincent, OFM CAP.

² Nadya with some students
Photos Credit: MIC



Thérèse Chabot, M.I.C.

Sr. Thérèse worked in Japan and Canada in the field of education. These past years, she dedicated her time towards the integration of youth and immigrants into the labor market. Currently, she collaborates in promoting the Good News via missionary animation in Quebec.

VOCATION, — A Prevalent Question

Do you have an idea of the question that is often asked when I go about promoting the Good News? Without doubt, it is a prevalent question since everywhere I go, it comes up. It seems to be a concern for many people. What is the famous question? *Do you have vocations?* An immediate and happy reply is: *Yes.* The next question that comes up: *Where do they come from?* Without hesitation: *They come from everywhere, particularly from countries where young women see the missionaries at work.*

This question of public interest has led me to deepen my reflection. I believe that since the faith has become less apparent and the younger generations have been growing up in a society characterized by religious indifference, our challenge today is to create a culture of vocation and this within a larger concept—the Christian vocation.

THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION

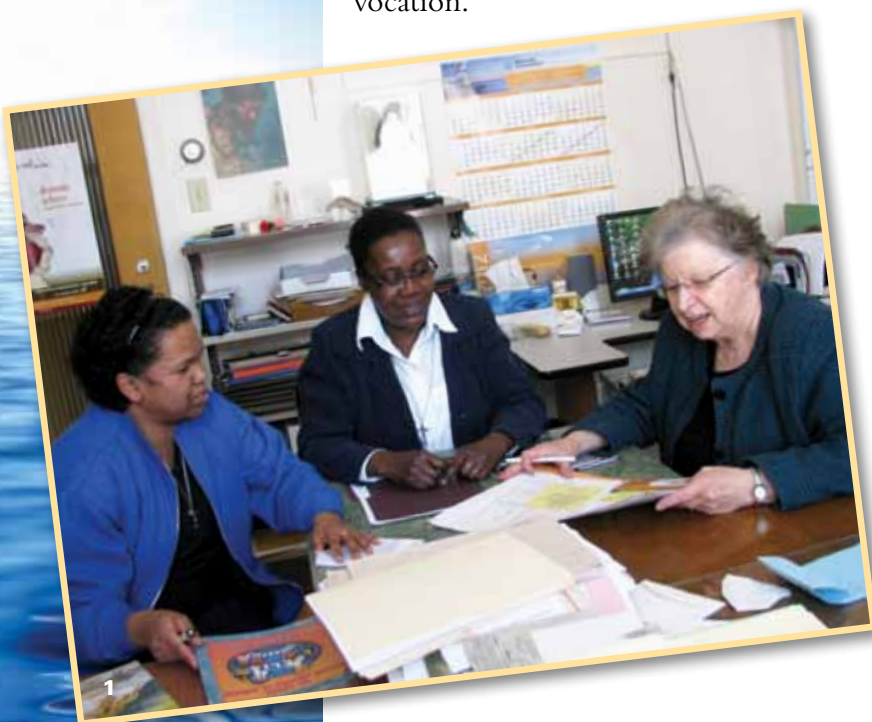
As Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, our first mission is to reveal Jesus Christ. Knowing that every human being has a dream within, it is our greatest joy to support the discovery of God's dream for each individual. We rejoice when a profound and intimate experience with the person of Jesus transforms the life of an individual. To propose Jesus Christ to those who never encountered Him is a mission more than ever pertinent for our times. This is a field of work that never tires in employing people who so desire to consecrate one's time and energy for a good cause.

FAITHFUL TO PRAYER AND OFFERING

No matter where they are, active in the mission field or back home from years in mission territories, the Sisters draw their joy and courage from that intimate heart to heart encounter with their Lord. For example, at our MIC Central House in Laval, many of the Sisters who are now retired from active involvement overseas continue living their mission as an offering of themselves in a spirit of thanksgiving. They are vigilant and pray for the salvation of humanity. They are particularly interested in young people who are searching for meaning in their lives, who desire to know what their specific role is in our world. After years of dedication in the Lord's vineyard, the heart of our missionaries still beats for the love of Jesus' mission—is this not a commitment of greatest value?

A HUMANIZING PRESENCE

From the MIC Central House, we also have Sisters who are actively involved



in distributing food and clothing to poor families; the goods come from generous companies. Others offer their services as mediators to individuals who suffer from a degenerative sickness and have no family members to take care of them. A special kind of presence is also offered to inmates, to prisoners who are victims of their weaknesses— Jesus’ loving compassion is revealed in many different ways. The significant outreach of the missionaries helps individuals to experience God’s loving care, His Providence that never fails and whose Heart is touched by human misery.

TEACHING CATECHESIS AND FORMATION

To heighten peoples’ awareness of their Christian vocation, it goes without saying that we must know the person of Jesus. Some of our missionaries dedicate themselves to the teaching of catechesis. Telling children that they are loved by God, giving them opportunities to experience the Lord’s goodness often expressed through their parents, bringing to their awareness that Jesus dwells in their hearts and that they can speak to Him as a good friend who cares, isn’t this kind of teaching the most rewarding? For children to learn that they have brothers and sisters, different from them, who are also all loved by the same Father, isn’t this reality fascinating for the little ones? What a blessing it is when, as of our childhood years, we learn that we can dialogue intimately with Jesus. However, I want to specify that it is never too late to discover this luminous encounter with the person of Jesus. This is the rewarding gift of faith.

THE CULTURE OF A MISSIONARY SPIRIT

God is not short of means to be heard. Via missionary animation, homilies in parishes, and the promotion of our magazines *MIC Mission News* and *Le Précurseur* (French edition) some MIC Sisters meet thousands of people—through these mediums they bring about the Good News. Individuals who are touched by what they hear or what they read can in turn,

according to their talents, become agents of the Good News in their respective milieu. Some volunteer to be promoters of the magazine; they reach out to people at school, at work, within the family circle, their social club. In other words, they find ways to spread the Good News.

A CALLING TO BE FOSTERED

We believe that the Holy Spirit is still calling. Some young people opt to dedicate themselves as lay missionaries. A good number of adults are involved in parish organizations. Young married couples are concerned about how they can transmit the faith to their children. A grandfather once told me that he fetches his two granddaughters for Mass every Sunday; one of them is now old enough to proclaim the Gospel. Other youngsters develop a spirit of self-giving by participating in very concrete projects; this is one of the goals of the *MIC Youth Solidarity Project*. Together, with the organizers, the young adults elaborate the different phases of a humanitarian project and then take action.

My reflection on “vocation” brings me to speak about the “Year of the Faith”. Indeed, could we not decide to disclose this beautiful gift of the faith as if it were new? How about taking a closer look at the faith that gives joy to the heart and then dare to begin a conversation on the subject? Like Abraham this could be the beginning of a great journey. The joy of believing added to our talents, to our dreams, brings about a spiritual dimension to all our projects. When the faith is well rooted and nourished, young people enthusiastically reach out and are happy to be at the service of a humanitarian, missionary cause *in the name of their faith*.

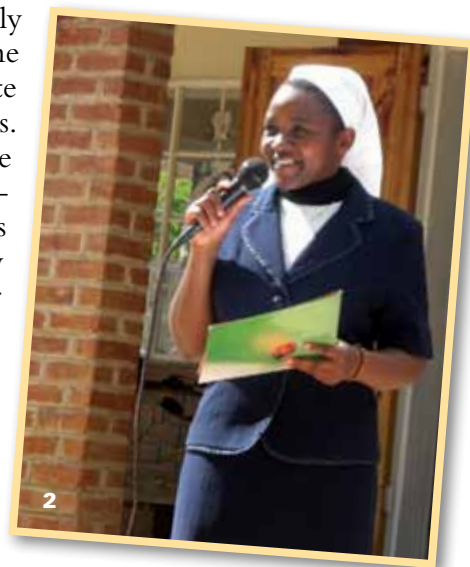
If you are hearing the call to set out on a journey which would lead you in rediscovering your faith, what means would you take for this to occur? ☺

¹ MIC Vocations Committee in Quebec

Photo Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

² Treazer Banda, M.I.C., Mzuzu, Malawi

Photo Credit: H. Ostiguy, M.I.C.



2



Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

FAITH:

“A Tiny Bud of Hope”

The author of this article takes her inspiration from Charles Péguy’s poem: ‘The Portal of the Mystery of Hope’. This 20th century French Catholic poet presents Hope as the frailest of the virtues represented by ‘little girl Hope’ who stands between her two ‘older’ sisters Faith and Charity, drawing them forward.

If the French Canadian composer, Robert Lebel can sing: “Not Any Kind of Love”, can we not also say: “Not Any Kind of Faith”? Can we consider such a statement when in our day and age everything is being questioned? Actually, there is an angle to Faith that can help us discover the dynamic vitality of another virtue. Charles Péguy, the great French writer, poet and essayist, gives us an insight in his poem *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*.

*The Faith that I like best,
says God, is Hope.
Faith does not surprise me
because I shine everywhere in my creation.
What amazes me, says God, is Hope.
It astonishes me because of the
continual sense, despite tragedy,
that tomorrow will be better.
Hope flows with the abundance of grace.
God exclaims: What is my grace
and what is the strength of my grace
that this little Hope,
trembling with every gasp,
anxious at the least breath,
be as unceasing,
as faithful, as righteous, as pure.
Hope, says God, amazes me (...)
And the easy way, is the slope to despair,
that is the great temptation.*

A HOPE THAT CELEBRATES

This tiny bud—Hope, does not come easily. However, where she has taken root, joy radiates and is often contagious. This joy is at the service of humanity. At the Bavarian Folk Festival which took place at Castel Gandolfo, Italy, in August 2012, Pope Benedict XVI delivered a speech in which he said: *The Bavarian culture is joyful because it always has emphasized being in harmony with creation and God the creator*. Some people asked if it is right to be so happy when the world is so full of suffering, when there is so much darkness and so much pain. The Pope replied: *The answer can only be a ‘yes’ because saying ‘no’ to this joy benefits no one, it only makes the world darker. ... We live in this joy, and try to bring this joy to others, to reject evil and to be servants of peace and reconciliation.*¹

Is it not this astounding hope we have seen on January 12, 2010, when Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake? Though in distress, groups of people spontaneously began to sing and dance, crying out their hope in ‘Papa Bon Dié’. *“The Faith I like most, says God, is Hope.”*

A HOPE SEEKING TO BE INVIGORATED

This Faith-Hope has a source which keeps it alive. Jesus Himself took time to withdraw from the crowds; He went to the mountain to pray.

Is it not this Faith-Hope that moves men and women to world sanctuaries where prayer is intense, where crowds of people having one spirit gather to recollect and then return home invigorated? And is it not the Faith-Hope that moves individuals to chapels and churches, where adoration fills the air, where silence instills peace, liberates the heart from its heavy burdens? Jesus did say: *Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest* (Mt. 11:28). A simple way of taking care of the tiny bud of Hope!

A HOPE THAT IS STRENGTHENED

When trials are just too much and we become disoriented, great is the temptation to abandon the ideal we had in mind. This is a reality we observe in those two disciples who had followed Jesus in good faith and had hope in Him. *We hoped that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more,*

it is the third day since all this took place (Lk. 24: 21). Not knowing that they were in the presence of Jesus, the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, spoke of their disappointment. While conversing with this person who had joined them along the road, they felt their hearts warming up. When he disappeared after breaking bread with them, their hope was revived; immediately they returned to Jerusalem to join the others. Who were the others? They were the disciples, the community of believers who had a common goal. *Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when He broke the bread* (Lk. 24:35). Yes, the community, a place where hope can be invigorated by sharing our life experiences in various ways.

If, together, we decided to be missionaries of that 'tiny bud of Hope' we would *sow happiness by the hand-ful* according to Délia Tétreault. *It is that HOPE that God loves*, says Charles Péguy. *Yes, HOPE standing between Faith and Charity crosses the world of ages.*² ∞

¹ Catholic News Service, August 5, 2012

² PÉGUY, Charles, *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005

The Disciples of Emmaus
Watercolor by M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



Missionary Dynamism



Our elderly MIC Sisters are still very much interested in our mission work here in Canada and abroad. Through their prayerful lives they support the missionary works of the MICs and uphold all hearts that open up to the Good News. A quick look at the different countries in which we have become integrated will give an idea of the new forms of involvement we are engaged in. Our goal is to be at the service of people and groups in search of human and spiritual growth.

In collaboration: MIC Website Team

CANADA

In our multiethnic and pluralistic society, the needs and places of involvement are numerous. This explains why we find MIC Sisters in diverse ministries and services: missionary promotion, various services to immigrants, one of which is teaching French, religious instruction given to catechumens, participation in parish and diocesan pastoral ministry, youth ministry, multimedia services, ecumenism, ecology, individual counseling and group sessions for human and spiritual growth, teaching at university level, volunteer services for the elderly, home visits to the poor.

PHILIPPINES

While keeping education as a priority, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in the Philippines constantly work with tribal aborigines and the most destitute of the society. They also reach out to the leaders of tomorrow by taking part in the University Campus Pastoral Ministry—the aim is to integrate a ‘living faith’ in one’s life as well as working towards social transformation. The Sisters participate in certain movements which search for a common ground of cooperation between the business world, civil society and the government—the aim is to work together to eradicate corruption.

HONG KONG

Besides the large schools of Good Hope and Tak Oi, various social and pastoral activities are carried out. Two MIC Sisters live in mainland China where they foster human and Christian values through their professional commitment in the field of education. Others visit the leprosarium located near Wan Fau in order to bring comfort and joy to the sick.

TAIWAN

One of the priorities in Taiwan is to bring constant support to women and children who are victims of violence. Special attention is given to immigrants, particularly Filipino factory workers.

A Sister participates in the formation of Women Religious in China. She gives them conferences on spirituality, prayer and workshops on religious life.

JAPAN

In the land of the 'Rising Sun' the ministries of the MIC Sisters are varied. In Kindergarten classrooms they help children develop their learning skills. They are also involved in adult religious education, bible sharing groups, PHR (Personality-Human Relations) sessions and multiple parish activities. Attention is given to immigrants in need of help.

HAITI

In Haiti, the MIC Sisters help the people keep hope alive in the midst of numerous difficulties. Among the many forms of services they offer to the population, they pursue their priority—the holistic education of children and adult formation that they may contribute in building a better future for the generations to come. Currently, the challenge is to maintain Dubuisson, the last mission territory, which serves a population in a remote region.

CUBA

Havana, Colon and Los Palacios are the three cities from where the MIC Sisters spread out for pastoral services both at the diocesan and national levels. Throughout the year they are deeply involved in the formation of youth groups and their facilitators; they offer them retreats, celebrate the 'Pascua Juvenile' which is a youth rally of young Christians from all dioceses—trainee workshops as well as individual accompaniment are among the activities offered. The Sisters keep close contact with people who have immediate needs such as: food, clothing, companionship. This Gospel way of making Christ's attitude visible today opens hearts to His message of Love.

PERU AND BOLIVIA

Peru and Bolivia, two countries where the Sisters give their best. **In Bolivia**, the promotion of women is a priority. The

Institute of Rural Education offers the Quechua and Aymara population many possibilities: sewing, knitting, weaving; there are also courses in literacy, nursing, and veterinary medicine. Added to these is the appreciated Computer science program. At Cochabamba the Sisters welcome lay missionaries and families who have a link with the community. **In Peru**, Maria de la Providencia College (primary and secondary cycles) has been providing a solid education based on Catholic principles and values. You can visit their website at <http://www.mariaprovidencia.edu.pe/>

MALAWI AND ZAMBIA

In these two countries Sisters work hard to spread the Youth Alive movement whose aim is to help young people face the AIDS crisis through behavior change. Through this educational process the young adults teach other youths how to live a happy life now and prepare themselves for the future. The fight against AIDS is also carried out at our Kanyanga Rural Hospital. In Malawi as well as in Zambia the Sisters are involved in the fields of education, health care, visual arts, and parish ministry. Also important to them are the orphans whose parents died of AIDS, young women interested in religious life, the promotion of women, and the human, spiritual development of future leaders who will ensure the countries' development and that of the African Church.

MADAGASCAR

Religious sects are becoming increasingly numerous in this country; such a fact compels convinced Christians to deepen their faith. Wanting to respond to this need the MIC Sisters have set up faith sharing groups for adults and children. Also, in their schools they offer their teachers sessions in educational psychology, have introduced youth ministry and mission awareness programs. With a team of lay people, a Sister also manages a Center for Adult Continuing Education; their teaching is based on Christian psychology. ♡

Mélanie Delfin, M.I.C.,
in the Philippines
Photo Credit: MIC



A Family Trait

While looking at one's life, we can wish or feel within our heart the desire to leave behind some traces which others could follow. This is not out of pride but rather out of a life centered on values we would like to see extended and last for the world of tomorrow. Will young people adjust their feet into our footsteps? Surely not! The only thing they might keep is that little bright flame from the heart which shines in our eyes, which motivates our actions and allows the great dream of our life to take root and be transformed into a reality? Could this not be considered as a family trait?



Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

LEAVING A TRACE BEHIND

In religious institutions as well as in families, from one generation to another, the spirit of the Founder is transmitted and embodied in its members and in people around them. It is conveyed in time, in other countries and in other cultures. Ways of doing things can change but the heart remains the same—that of the MIC Sisters is molded in gratitude.

Oh! I will not be telling you long stories, but a few. It is obvious that the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, without their knowing it,

have left behind indelible traces in the heart of people with whom and for whom they have worked. Yes, we recognize these persons by our family trait.

PASS IT ON

Our mission works: schools, hospitals, dispensaries are now in the hands of either our native MIC Sisters or competent lay people; they assure the continuity. In all these establishments, a special kind of heart keeps beating—that of its origins. Through the many missionaries who have succeeded one another along

the years, a spirit was transmitted and people have been touched, marked by a trait they observed. How to explain that all the way from Hong Kong or Japan former students come to Canada specifically to meet, once again, their former teachers. Some come to celebrate with them an anniversary, others to simply pray on the tomb of the deceased teacher they loved and to say: "THANK YOU". There is a Haitian woman who comes every year to adorn our chapel at Pont-Viau, with beautiful red roses in gratitude to the "Mothers" who founded the first primary school in Mirebalais. This Institution has allowed so many young girls to continue their higher education, to find work and to contribute in building the country's future. From Vancouver, a young couple with their four children comes to Pont-Viau to express their joy and gratitude to the Sister who made it possible for them to meet. And the list could go on.

At one time, in 1916, our Foundress, Venerable Délia Tétreault, wrote to one of her spiritual daughters:

Let each of our lives, through prayer, sacrifice and work be a perpetual hymn of thanksgiving for ourselves and for all those who forget to give thanks to the One from whom they received everything. Let us become impregnated with this idea in such a way that we pass it on to those who will replace us.

We can say "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!" From Canadian land and faraway lands where we worked and still are involved, hymns of thanksgiving are heard and offered to God who is always present in our midst. Yes, so many dedicated people continue committing themselves to works of the missionary Church and we continue being most grateful.

SISTERS AND BROTHERS-AsMIC

Have you ever met them? Do you know the AsMIC? They are the Associates of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. We recognize these dedicated lay people by their Marian and mis-

sionary spirituality of Thanksgiving. We find MIC Associates in eleven countries. They do not live in groups, but at home as couples or as single persons. Once a month they come together to deepen their spirituality, share their experiences, develop mutual fellowship. Together they celebrate the Eucharist and are spiritually linked with the MIC Sisters. Their personal time frame for prayer is adjusted to fit the social life of the members. The members commit themselves to live by their faith and witness it in their everyday life. They don't make much noise but are very much active, somewhat like yeast in the dough.

In the Province of Quebec, Canada, there are five AsMIC groups (Granby, Joliette, Laval, Montreal, Quebec City). This extended spiritual family of the MIC Sisters is different from the lay missionaries: The latter are sent to a mission "ad extra" while the AsMIC members participate in the missionary activity of the Church in their own living environments; they collaborate to the mission "ad intra", that is the local Church. In some countries, a good number of members offer their professional skills and help in our various ministries.

I have known the AsMIC in Japan and now I have the joy of journeying with the group in Granby. What wonderful people! Interested and enthusiastic they are everywhere where help is needed; they reach out to make visible the love of God for all humanity. They are committed to social justice and Church issues, they organize fund-raising campaigns for missionary projects, they are creative, jovial, and love to help the needy no matter their backgrounds.

You won't hear anything about the AsMIC in the Newspapers and T.V news even though they are messengers of the "Good News". The Association has a thirty year life span and is gratified with approximately five hundred members.

BRAVO! WELCOME! There is also a place for you in the beautiful family of Mother Délia. 

AsMIC from Quebec

Photo Credit: J. Dallaire

Dawn Of A New Life



Jeanne Desclos, M.I.C.
(Sr. Jeanne-Hélène) 1934-2012
Saint-Alexis-des-Monts, QC

Jeanne appreciated her loving, generous, caring family. Having graduated from a teacher training school, her teaching vocation was soon confirmed as well as her call to the missionary religious life. She entered the MIC Novitiate in 1954. She demonstrated her love for the youth while teaching in Granby and in 1987 Sr. Jeanne was appointed to Madagascar. Her talent in management led her to implement the Catholic Pedagogical Institute (ICP). The Conference of Major Superiors took interest in the project. Financial aid was sent from Europe and the construction was finalized in 1992. Mission accomplished—congratulations! In 1996, Sister Jeanne's failing health determined her return to her homeland, Quebec.



Henriette Sylvestre, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marthe-du-Sacré-Coeur)
1928-2012
Macamic, (Abitibi), QC

She was only 5 years old and was already eager to go to school. Henriette's mother, former teacher, taught her the basic elements of the children's catechism and the alphabet. Her primary and high-school years were brilliantly achieved; from there she went to nursing school. Human suffering touched Henriette deeply; prayer was her strength and medical science became a source to exploit. At 24 she entered the Novitiate and was then mandated to our missions in Africa. The healing herbs of that continent fascinated her. Talented in business affairs, Sister successfully obtained support for the reconstruction of a dilapidated hospital in Malawi. Her intuition and talents produced abundant fruits. Sr. Henriette's life was well fulfilled.



Jeannine Lavallée, M.I.C.
(Sr. François-de-Fatima)
1928-2012
Montreal, QC

As of her primary school years, Jeannine's passion for studies and reading was obvious; throughout her life these preferences filled in her leisure time. On August 8, 1949, she entered the Novitiate. In Quebec and in Madagascar she excelled in teaching. Physics, chemistry, mathematics, Christology were her priorities. Immersed in the mysteries of the cosmos she marveled before the beauty of creation. Upon her return to Canada in 2001 the MIC archives department benefitted from her research; the library was her favorite place—the literary world was at her fingertips. With you Sr. Jeannine, we give thanks.

*Partings here on earth are a promise
of meeting again for all eternity.*

— Délia Têtreault



Suzanne Rinfret, M.I.C.
(Sr. Claude-de-la-Colombière)
1926-2012
Ottawa, Ontario

Suzanne was born in Spring of 1926; she was the twelfth child in the faith-filled Rinfret family. Talented, she was successful at a very early age. A Bachelor's degree in hand, she received a grant to further her studies in French and was awarded a gold medal for Religion. In 1948, she entered the MIC Novitiate. After her formation, she was sent to Malawi and taught at Marymount Secondary School. Sister Suzanne's students admired and appreciated her expertise in geography. The promotion of women, the Focolari movement, ecumenism were all of interest to her; open minded, she respected all cultures. Sr. Suzanne, Magnificat for your beautiful life.



Rose-Hélène Turgeon, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marie-Hélène) 1919-2012
Saint-Anselme, QC

In retrospect, Rose-Hélène realized that being the 11th child of the family she was well nurtured. Her aunts who were religious had no clue that their presence brought about a special spiritual dimension in Rose-Hélène's life. At the age of twenty, she entered the MIC Novitiate. Her talents in teaching, accounting, sewing plus her ability to drive and run errands were greatly appreciated in Quebec and in Madagascar. Because of her competence in bookkeeping, Sister became the key person in training future bursars; her expertise was appreciated by many of us. Dear Sr. Rose-Hélène, our deep gratitude goes out to you.

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Prayer for Vocations

*O God, Father of all goodness,
you revealed to Venerable Délia Tétreault
the secrets of a life of union with you.
Grant your Holy Spirit to those
whom you call again today.*

*May they learn, as Délia did,
to be attentive to Mary,
in order to discover the unfathomable joy
of a missionary life of thanksgiving.*

*May your Holy Spirit communicate
to all these young people the fire of love
that enkindles the earth.*

*May that Spirit urge them to turn
towards others and bring them
to commit themselves to your project
of justice and peace, here and elsewhere.
May the Spirit precede them on the way
of the Visitation and of the Magnificat.*

*We ask you this through Jesus, your Son,
living and eternal God and through your
Holy Spirit, source of peace and joy.*

