

MIC MISSION NEWS

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To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

BOLIVIA

**A FUTURE
FULL OF HOPE**

CUBA

**CAN FAITH
BE SILENCED?**

IN FOCUS

*The Door
Is Open
—Welcome!*



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS - 2013

APRIL

FOR THE MISSION CHURCHES

— We pray that mission Churches may be signs and instruments of hope and resurrection.

MAY

FOR SEMINARIES — We pray that

seminaries, especially those of mission Churches, may form pastors after the Heart of Christ, fully dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel.

JUNE

FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

— We pray that where secularization is strongest, Christian communities may effectively promote the new evangelization.

MASSES FOR READERS' INTENTIONS OFFERED IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

January: *Canada*

February: *Cuba*

March: *Philippines*

April: *Haiti*

May: *Canada*

June: *Bolivia*

July: *Malawi and Zambia*

August: *Hong Kong and Taiwan*

September: *Madagascar*

October: *Peru*

November: *Japan*

December: *Canada*



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Built on Rock

Have you ever noticed when new condominiums are being built people's curiosity is aroused? Those who are searching for a new home or a new lifestyle seem particularly interested.

Open doors: the public is invited to tour a house—viewing it might help a person take the right decision.

This year, Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, offers us much more than a tour of condos; he has opened *the door of Faith*. It's an invitation to visit our inner sacred space so as to deepen the Christian mystery and discover its beauty. It's an invitation to solidify our knowledge of the faith and strive to attain full maturity in our Catholic identity so as to commit ourselves to a new, dynamic spiritual journey. Listen to the Word, Christ is present and speaks to us. To embrace this *Year of Faith* is to take up with enthusiasm the challenge of the New Evangelization, to find new ways of revealing the love of Christ for each and every one.

This issue wants to be an open door, an occasion for reflection on our life of Faith. In his article, *His Word Has a Spirit*, André Gadbois invites us to meet people of the Gospel. Sister Louisa Nicole states how, in Japan, she proclaimed the message of Christ by way of simple, practical applications. This Mission is at our door, it's up to us to enter. Could it be that we are the greatest obstacles to evangelizing the world of our time? Everyone is invited to participate in touring his/her inner space, to welcome the Word of God, to let its Spirit transform what needs to be changed from within, to transmit the Good News to others and discover the beauty of building our house *on the Rock*.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

Mother Délia Tétreault who opened all doors, of both her house and her heart wished above all to collaborate with her missionaries in extending God's Kingdom from one pole to the other. She was convinced that deep faith was very much needed and she would often talk about it in her letters.

Yes, yes, let us cultivate a spirit of Faith. (March 18, 1913)

Continue, my dear child, to find your guidance in faith and reason. By doing so, you will spread happiness around you and will savor it yourself.

(October 21, 1919)

Courage, therefore, and confidence; our faith will end up triumphant. (February 22, 1921)

You say that a miracle would be needed? The good God will do it if you have the faith. (November 15, 1921)

After asking for the extension of God's Kingdom and that of our Immaculate Mother, we ask for the spirit of Faith, of Prayer and of Thanksgiving. (November 29, 1924)

Where is your spirit of Faith?... Let us love God and the rest shall be added unto you. (September 30, 1925)

Beseech our Immaculate Mother... to engrave within your inmost self... the spirit of Faith. (October 24, 1927)

For us who have the Faith and who, through our holy vocation, must live in a spirit of Faith, we must occasionally remember the Gospel message: "... the disciple is not above his master". (November 25, 1928)

FOR ALL
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HIS WORD HAS A SPIRIT

*In this Year of Faith, let the Word shine;
allow its Life-giving message to lift us up
and acknowledge that in the World,
the Risen Christ also raises us up...
come what may!*



André Gadbois

The other day, I was in some kind of a bind. For the past 37 years, whenever I needed help I would usually go to my neighbors, Claude and Lise on my right or to my neighbors, Hector and Irene on the left. But it so happened that all four were absent, WOW! So, I decided to cross the street and try my other neighbors, Claudine and Gilles; they were home and were able to respond to my need. As I left their house, I was somewhat struck (though not like Saint Paul who fell from his horse) but, struck a bit when I noticed the stunning beauty of our wooden house with its dovetail joints. I was discovering it from far and from the front, quite a different angle than when I see it up close, from the side, or when I am inside. With the years, I no longer paid much attention to it, nor did I stop to examine its

beauty; rushing in and out of the house curbed my sense of wonder before its architectural charm. The same happened when I skimmed through the Gospel of St. John: I had never noticed or discovered the beauty of verse 16, chapter 14: *I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.* This phrase is an extract from a long discourse Jesus had with His disciples; it illustrates the Good Shepherd's clear insight and awareness of the challenges His followers would have to deal with after His return to the Father. I consciously became aware that this SOMEONE speaks to *me*, and He desires to awaken in me the gift of WONDER. Wonderment comes as I discover the Spirit of the Word of God; phrases, words of the Eternal become alive when spoken by Jesus of Nazareth known

as the Word. The Holy Spirit brings about inspiration, deep inner understanding, new vision of things, spiritual rebirth. When my own words and discoveries entangle me, He desires to liberate me. When my convictions are indisputable, He wants me to welcome others who have a different point of view. When my fears make me curl up like a julus millipedes, He wants me to walk straight and with assurance. I easily give up my searching but He teaches me to resist the temptation. I take delight in my comfortable world and secure ways of doing things, but He tries to nourish me that I may lift up the World and bring my contribution to its humanization. I exclude but He includes, I condemn but He awakens to the Truth. I am narrow-minded but He expands my vision. He is by my side, by the side of the Church and in the World. He wants the Word to speak out, to encourage, to console, to heal and even to resurrect the dead. Not only does He want to speak the Word to the Church but to the whole of Humanity.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORD

So long ago, in the time of King Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Word spoke. A Word spoken and given to the last drop of His Blood; a total gift of Self. We killed Him: it was the murder of the Word. Jesus asked the Father to give us SOMEONE to help us: the Spirit of this Word. Fenced-in, do we accept that He breaks down our barriers? Do we accept being taught to take a risk, to be awakened to new realities? Do we accept to take up the challenge and walk the road less travelled? Do we need help to capture the intentions of the Risen One, to hear the Spirit of His Word in the Church and in the World of our time?

In this *Year of Faith*, let us listen, hear and contemplate the written Word. Let us meet with the Samaritan woman, Zaccheus, the Prodigal son, the shepherds led to the Infant Jesus, the multiplication of the bread which fed the hungry, the adulterous woman, the man born blind,

the centurion, Mary-Magdalene, the Canaanite woman whose daughter was healed, the people who listened to Jesus' discourse on the mountain. The Eternal Word is seen in Jesus' welcoming attitude, in His tender, merciful love for each and every one, in His attentiveness to the needs of individuals, in His way of thinking and of responding. All those individuals who came in contact with Jesus were transformed and each one in his or her own way marveled at what they heard, saw and experienced—newness of life was given to each one. And nowadays, the less fortunate of our societies, the incurables, the outcasts, the hungry and homeless, the marginalized, could they find a place in our hearts? Perhaps we could question our gentleness, our open-mindedness, and allow the Spirit of the Word to inspire us and help us discover Jesus' way of thinking.

¹ BELLET, Maurice, *Si je dis CREDO* (If I Say CREDO) Bayard, 2012, p. 119

The Risen Christ raises us up! 

What is asked of us? Surely to act with our conscience... enlightened by His Word: to act humbly and sincerely without expecting any kind of return, to act lovingly and justly. Also, to give thanks because in this World the Risen One raises us to new heights beyond our imagination. He is at work and does not relent because of our rigidity or by the nonchalance of the disciples. His Resurrection is not only a past event which took place in the time of Herod, it is an Energy at work in our World. Too many Christians imagine that Jesus' Resurrection belongs to the Church. Men and women of Faith and deep convictions enable the Spirit to transform, to give New Life where life has been stifled and has withered away. According to Maurice Bellet, *a man and a woman of Faith have no greater wisdom than to work for that which heals, nourishes, uplifts humanity, giving it a renewed life with the Energy whose Source is inexhaustible.*¹ 

IN THE MEDIA WORLD



Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

¹ Sr. Micheline (center)
with 2 ACPC Members

Photo Credit: G. Leblanc

Website:

www.ensonnom.org

Persons who are deeply involved in the universe of publications on religious themes have underlined the event that occurred in the Fall of 2012: the 70th Anniversary of the review *EN SON NOM – Vie consacrée aujourd’hui*. Two symposiums were held at Quebec and Montreal. Let us mention here that this magazine is the former “*La vie des communautés religieuses*” founded in 1947, well-known by French-speaking religious communities, with a new name since 2007. Since then, with a larger opening to various forms of consecrated life and to lay groups who share the charism of our founders and foundresses, *EN SON NOM* meets with audacity the challenges that religious communities face in a society where secularism is on the rise.

These symposiums have provided great opportunities to underline current events of the contemporary Church – 50th Anniversary of Vatican II, the Year of Faith, the Synod on New Evangelization – and put in focus some hopeful ways,

opening paths for the future of consecrated life.

During these conferences, the Directress and Chief-Editor of the review, Sr. Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C., received a warm homage from Sr. Monique Thériault, S.N.J.M., President of the Council of Administration, for her collaboration to the review during the last ten years and for her role as coordinator of these encounters. Her striving for perfection was underlined, as well as the precious collaboration of her M.I.C. companions of the organizing team, Sr. Paulette Gagné and Sr. Patsy Morency.

A WOMAN OF COMMUNICATIONS

These events have a special importance for us, Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, because Sr. Micheline belongs to our religious family. Her interest for the review *EN SON NOM* goes back quite far in time since she was a member of the Editorial Committee in 2002, while also a member of the MIC Provincial Council

in Canada. She accepted to become Directress and Chief Editor in January 2008, a date that marks a new identity and an extension of its readership for the review. It is now destined, not only to readers of a long religious tradition, but to “new” communities, to lay institutes and other forms of consecrated life, as well as to lay persons engaged in spiritual families. The new Directress has been successful with her audacious ways and wide opening in dealing with religious life issues.

The commitment of Sr. Micheline in the field of social communications is the result of a long association. As a young religious, she was a collaborator with the Pontifical Works and their magazines *Frères Lointains*. After conducting a mission in the Malagasy Republic, she returned to work for Service Mond’Ami (Missionary Childhood Association) and took up the responsibility of the magazines for primary school students. Later on, she became editor for several years of *Le Précurseur* and *MIC Mission News* for her own religious community. These publications are still alive today and continue to be read by the public in Canada as well as in several other countries where the MIC Sisters are present.

INFLUENCE OF DÉLIA TÉTREAU

When she had to decide to accept the offer of becoming the Directress of *EN SON NOM*, Sr. Micheline remembers that she was influenced by the charism of Délia Tétreault, Foundress of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception. This “avant-garde” woman was a true communicator well ahead of her times! At the beginning of the century, when the media were practically nothing but the printed press, we see Mother Délia publish a 100-page booklet on the first missionary venture of her small community in Canton, China, illustrated with professional photos. She firmly believed in the influence of promotion as she launched her Sisters on the roads of the Quebec Province with a “magic lantern” (the ancestor of the

slide projector) and photos mounted on glass sheets to add “views” to their presentations in schools and during Mission Exhibitions. In 1920, she undertakes to publish *Le Précurseur* and the English counterpart three years later. She wanted to reach large audiences and proclaim the Good News *above the roofs*, to quote the words of Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* #45.

When questioned on her career in communications, Sr. Micheline mentioned the influence of her Foundress: *This preference of Délia Tétreault to use means of social communications for mission awareness and her opening to other religious communities right from the beginning of her own foundation were elements that impressed me when I had to decide and say “yes” to the offer made by the review EN SON NOM. I saw it as a service of the Church, not only for our own needs, but also for other congregations and institutes, for consecrated persons and associates, a large public here and abroad, a service of resources to inform, to animate, to train... It’s a fascinating task – and even a real challenge – to pass on the message and reach people, especially those who lack resources in their far-away mission fields. These landmarks linked with the spirituality of our Foundress are always present in my life and still enlightens my mission in 2013.*

HAIL TO THE REVIEW

Members of the ACPC (Association canadienne des périodiques catholiques) have recognized the quality of the review *EN SON NOM* and it was honored for a third consecutive year last November. A prize ACPC-Inter 2012 was attributed for an article by Pierre-Olivier Tremblay, O.M.I. – *Avec les jeunes, la mission en pratique*.

Congratulations to Sr. Micheline Marcoux, M.I.C., to the collaborators of the review *EN SON NOM*, en route towards a new decade of success in the mission of publications at the service of consecrated life. 

The commitment of Sr. Micheline in the field of social communications is the result of a long association.



INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE



Émilien Roscanu is a CEGEP student who is currently studying humanities. History and politics are his passion as well as the arts scene and dramatic art. Dedicated to his community, he is a young man who also loves debating ideas.

¹ Émilien shares his knowledge in computer science.

Photo Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

² Stock Photo

By Émilien Roscanu

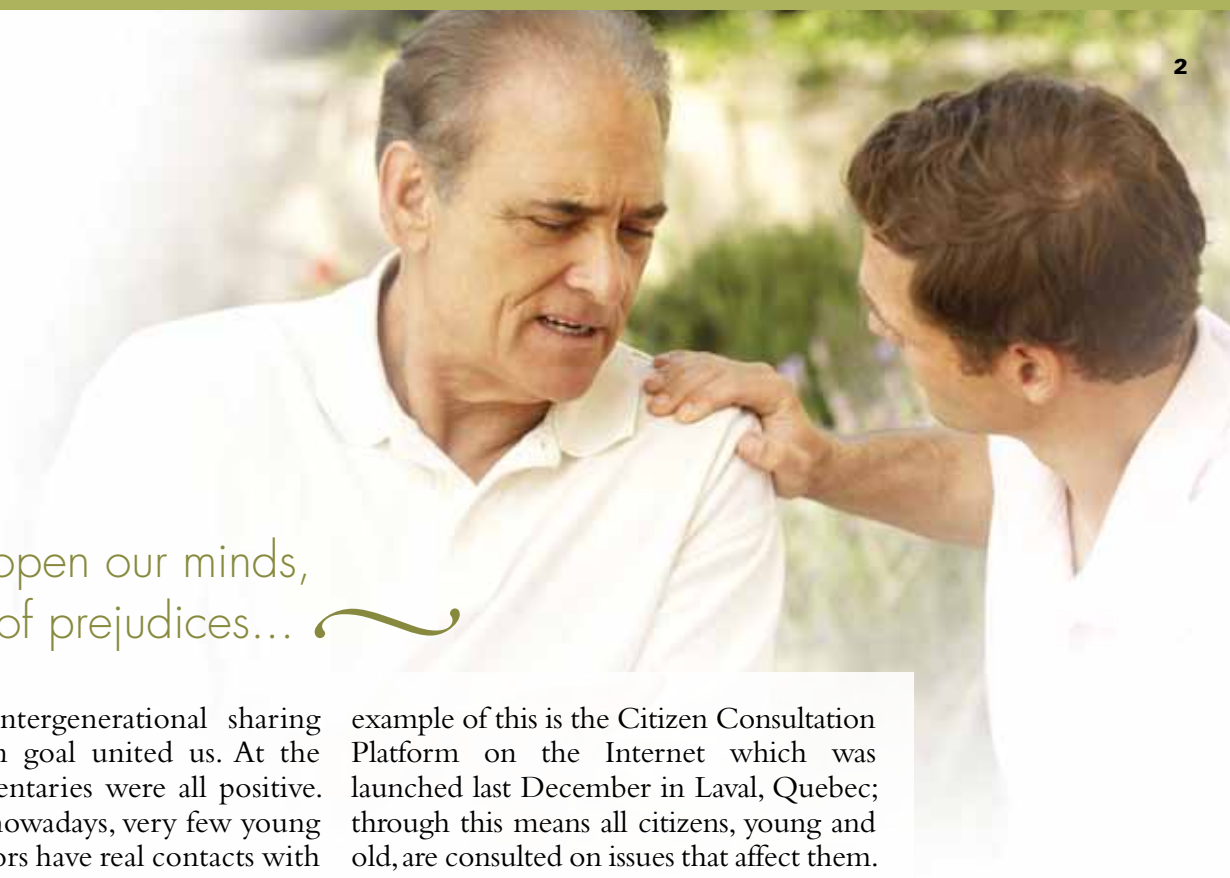
On one hand, we often hear that young people are disenchanted, not really committed nor concerned about what's at stake in community issues. On the other hand, we hear that adults and the elderly are rather individualistic. However, that's far from being the case! This stereotype vision of the youth and young adults has a harmful effect on dialogue and in the way of sharing ideas which are so much needed to improve and develop our societies. Neglecting others and refusing to listen are behaviors which must be avoided at all cost.

OPENNESS TOWARD THE OTHER —A CHALLENGE!

The key to maintain dialogue and to debate ideas is openness. So many struggles for justice, so many suppressed hopes, so many futile debates between governments and students' associations as well as labor unions; well positioned on their respective ideas they are unable to come to a compromise. Near or far, we all have felt the effects of hardliners; refusing to dialogue, unwilling to discuss in a sincere and intelligent manner can only cause dissension and can also lead to social crisis. Stubbornness, double talk, turn a deaf ear bring us nowhere. Many young adults want genuine debates that lead to progress. They are 'turned on', idealistic, committed, they have an inexhaustible craving for knowledge and want to invest in large-scale projects. Unfortunately, too often the media looks upon them unfavorably. We must give them a chance to prove themselves and hear what they have to say.

WE GAVE THEM LIFE—WE SHOULD NOW LISTEN TO THEM...

Three years ago, I joined a twinning project between teens and seniors called *Ados@branchés* which took place in a Laval library. The aim of this activity was to initiate the seniors on how to use their computers and browse the internet. This experience was for me an opportunity to share my knowledge with individuals who knew very little about computers. I was in contact with two charming ladies who were of another generation. It was amazing and enriching to be the



If we will open our minds,
letting go of prejudices... ~

actor of this intergenerational sharing whose common goal united us. At the end, the commentaries were all positive. Unfortunately nowadays, very few young people and seniors have real contacts with each other. We become greatly enriched when we share with people we hardly know and understand. If we will open our minds, letting go of prejudices and stereotypical thinking, we will then in a common vision for progress be capable of true dialogue and sharing.

YOUTH AND PESSIMISM

To exclude tomorrow's decision makers from all societal debates can only have a pessimistic effect. Young people are bearers of a vibrant life-giving flame but certain hopeless situations stifle their fervor. Corruption, collusion, armed conflicts, student conflicts, resentment... before all these crisis and problems that plague our societies, young people often feel helpless and useless. Taking initiative and setting up participatory projects calling upon all members of the society are needed more than ever. Many young people now take initiatives and leadership roles; they are awakened to their social responsibilities and concretely get involved on issues that concern them but they are also interested in intergenerational communication. A good

example of this is the Citizen Consultation Platform on the Internet which was launched last December in Laval, Quebec; through this means all citizens, young and old, are consulted on issues that affect them. Including young adults in the realm of our society's great institutions is a step in the right direction; it's an excellent initiative that will lead us to newness and change.

LET US LOVE EACH OTHER

There can be no debate without first listening and hearing what is being said. Without debate, there can be no real evolution in our society. We must be sensitized to the needs of others, whether they are from here or elsewhere, whether they are students or retired. We cannot criticize those who fight each other if we, as members of the same society, cannot dialogue. Young people must take care of their elderly and listen to their precious advice; the people of middle age must listen to those who will be tomorrow's leaders. This kind of mutual respect and sympathetic ear is beneficial for all. The French author, Georges Bernanos once said: *If youth cools off, the teeth of the whole world will chatter.* On the other hand, if the youth is switched on, realizing it is being heard and is an integral part of the whole, it will then, in turn, light up the world. ~

Support our Missionary Projects

In the town of Mzimba, Malawi, Africa, the MIC Sisters have a kindergarten. It is known as Delia's Kindergarten and has 25 orphans. For each child, \$25 a month is needed to pay for food, clothes and school fees. Since the establishment no longer receives help from the government nor from charitable organizations, we are in need of support from people who would be willing to extend a helping hand.

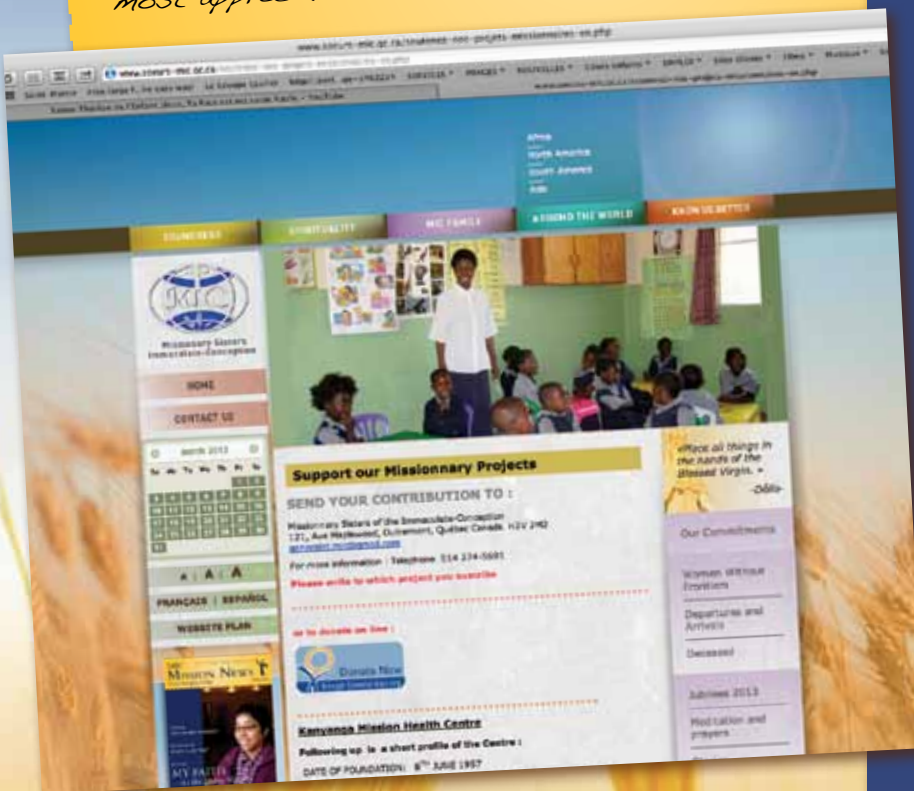
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www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

The Door Is Open — Welcome!

The Joy of Believing

Today, if the Church proposes the Year of Faith as well as a New Evangelization, it is not to celebrate an anniversary but rather because we need these now more than fifty years ago. In the past decades, a spiritual “desertification” has been progressing. In the years of Vatican Council II, we could perceive through certain tragic pages of history, what a world or life without God looked like. But today, unfortunately, we can see that phenomenon all around us. The void has widened. However, from this desert experience, from this void, this emptiness, we can discover once again the joy of believing and its vital importance for each one of us. In the desert we rediscover the essential value needed for life. In our contemporary world, though sometimes expressed implicitly or negatively, numerous are the signs of a need for God and of discovering the ultimate sense of life. While in the desert the most important is to find persons of faith who by their exemplary lives show the way to the Promised Land and thus keep hope alive. A living Faith opens the heart to God’s graces, spiritual gifts that liberate us from pessimism. Today, more than ever, evangelizing means to BE testimony of a life transformed by God and from that experience show the way.

Homily of Pope Benedict XVI for the opening of the Year of Faith (Oct. 11, 2012)



Witnessing a Vibrant Faith



Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

In its Pastoral Constitution, Vatican II tells us that “the Church goes forward together with humanity”. Every year, Quebec welcomes immigrants from all over the planet. Faith and hope are part and parcel of their luggage. Recently, I went to Notre Dame of Guadalupe Church, in Montreal, to celebrate with the parishioners their patron Feast. My heart vibrated to the rhythm of their joy and faith.



When I entered the church, on a beautiful December Sunday, I felt the joyful excitement which filled the atmosphere. Children, young people, women and men were all wearing their colorful national attire; the mood was festive. While waiting for the liturgical procession to begin, everybody smiled, greeted each other with hugs and wishes for a happy feast day. There was an exuberant joy. I looked at the crowd and was happy to be part of this feast to which I had been invited by Fr. Fernando Ferrera, O.F.M.

FEELING AT HOME

Though advanced in age, our Sister Maria Teresa Trujillo of 89 years was delighted to be in the choir. Herself being an immigrant, since 1950, she recognized her compatriots from Cuba, her native land. Taking part in the life of that parish, she knows first-hand what these people, uprooted from their native land, are going through. However, celebrating their cherished patron feast in their mother-tongue was a great joy. Many of the younger ones, born here in Canada, not only participate in these celebrations but they get to discover the characteristics and beauty of their own culture.

This year, the colors of Mexico were highlighted. The liturgical procession was led by participants wearing their attractive Aztec costumes; couples, young adults,

children, carried flowers, lights and liturgical objects. Wanting to treasure those moments, the clicks of cameras were heard all around. The many celebrants then walked in procession while the choir sang with all its might a song dedicated to Mary. The flags of their respective countries, including those of Canada and Quebec were brought up to the sanctuary as a symbol of the Church's universality. Msgr. Lionel Gendron, Bishop of Saint-Jean-Longueuil Diocese, presided over the liturgy in Spanish. In unison with the assembly, I could feel these people's vibrant faith in Jesus Christ and their happiness in celebrating together.

AN ATTENTIVE CHURCH

I became aware of the Church's respectful attitude toward the varied religious ways of expressing one's faith which is so essential in each one's life. Following Christ's example, the Church welcomes the new immigrants with their cultural, Christian values expressed in rituals which are dear to them. I can testify: these immigrants are fully-pledged, active members of their parish; they bring about a renewed faith, they hold values and resources that are to be acknowledged and honored.

At the offertory, a young couple presented to the Virgin Mary their new born baby and with joy the assembly applauded; at the Our Father, everyone spontaneously stretched their arms and formed a friendship chain. I felt we were all brothers and sisters united as one big family even though there were differences in languages, customs and religious traditions. The presence of the mariachis gave a Mexican solemn tone at the moment of the consecration. For the recessional, guitars and bugles accompanied the choir who sang an uplifting hymn to Our Lady of Guadalupe. For me, this was an unforgettable experience of what the universal Church is all about.

A QUESTION OF OPENNESS

The Church instills trust and hope in the hearts of the new immigrants. Their



2

arrival in our midst is an invitation for us to open our doors to new experiences and relationships. That's the meaning of an attentive Church, to hear and understand the aspirations of peoples, as was suggested by the Second Vatican Council. Migration is a phenomenon that changes the world, it calls us to come out of our cocoon and open ourselves to the richness of the other; it calls us to universal brotherhood. Didn't Jesus say: *Love your neighbor as yourself?* But at times we would want to answer: *But Lord, he is so different from me!* But then, we dream of equality, justice, fraternity in a world of peace and harmony.

This great humanitarian dream of togetherness is shared and desired by all. To live it on a daily basis is a challenge but also a constant calling beckoning us to recognize the barriers and take the necessary means to overcome the stumbling blocks; then we will be able to live happily together like on that lovely December Sunday. ~

¹ Presenting the child to Our Lady of Guadalupe

² An Aztec man leads the entrance procession

Photos Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

A Future Full of Hope

The author, DORINDA DUTCHER, is a former Peace Corps Volunteer who works with weavers in Bolivia. After some time, she heard a special calling. Her love of the Quechua women in the Bolivian Andes has led her to stay and devote her life to supporting the weavers in their efforts to rescue natural dye techniques and in the sales of their weavings.¹ Attentive to the needs of the local people, the author speaks to us about a young woman whose dream will hopefully come true.



*I*n 2010, Noemi Chavez was the first Huancarani raised Chicano of my acquaintance to proudly walk down the aisle to receive her diploma. With assistance from the local school system she received a scholarship to attend the *Instituto de Educación Rural* (IER), www.ier-bolivia.com, and enrolled in the Auxiliary Nursing Program. Her first vacation was only six weeks into the program when she visited the *Club de Chicas* to share her experiences to date. Noemi's enthusiasm was contagious and she proved to be an inspirational speaker. During the first six weeks they had intensive review of basic subjects, learned first aid, and had visited hospitals and the morgue.

Noemi's father has visited me several times in the past six months to ask for help. He said Noemi was making good grades and was still committed to completing the program, but the costs were beyond the family's economic means. I made arrangements to visit IER on my last trip into Cochabamba to get a better grasp on why the family was struggling with the costs if she was on a scholarship.

My admiration for Noemi rose to new heights as she gave me the grand tour around IER. It is a large park-like campus with food gardens; all girls work in the garden for two hours a week. Noemi



proudly showed me the tomatoes she had planted. There were two bulls and chickens for the veterinary technician program and food. A Canadian volunteer works with the girls twice a week to produce bread from a huge wood-burning oven.

Nursing is a separate program distinct from all the other courses. The building is home to a few classrooms, a library, an office for the instructor and a dormitory shared by the twenty girls enrolled. There is a small storage room filled with handmade posters the girls use in training exercises at the hospitals.

IER is a joint missionary project between the Archdioceses of Cochabamba and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, with Spanish and Canadian funding. The Sister in charge spent over an hour with us chatting. The nursing program costs \$145 a month of which \$45 must be paid by the student. Additional costs are \$16 a month for bus transportation to the hospitals four days a week twice a day for practical experience. Noemi's parents should be responsible for some of the costs such as the uniforms and personal expenses but that is the most they can contribute.

The "scholarship" Noemi received was an interest free loan which she is required to repay once she begins work-

ing. Unfortunately, Padre Manfred, a founder of the *Independencia* school system, who managed the scholarship fund passed away last year. The management of the funds has been taken over by the municipal government, and they are requesting immediate repayment. This is what Noemi's father is unable to do, living a subsistence lifestyle and having six children to care for at home.

Noemi understands the medical hardships facing those living in remote rural areas. Her dream is to return to Huancarani and staff the health facility. Almost all the communities have a facility, but few if any are staffed full time.

I have great faith in Noemi but at one point I feared this talented young student would have to drop out of the nursing program due to lack of financial support. Fortunately, she has received assistance through former Peace Corps volunteers for her schooling through graduation in December 2013.

Independencia City desperately needs a role model to prove to adolescent girls that dreams can be realized—Noemi will be the one to show other young women the way to fulfill their fondest wish. Thank you to all those who have helped Noemi! ♡

¹ *Club de Chicas*, Gaby and Reyna (Noemi's Sister)

² Supply room for classes in practical teaching

³ Noemi showing Cochabamba's districts and rural hospitals where the students work.

Photos Credit: D. Dutcher

¹ www.pazabolivia.org

The Breath of the Spirit in Japan



“We have not come to Japan to ‘canadianize’ the Japanese, but to respect them as they are and lead them to God.”

(Sister Madeleine-du-Sauveur, M.I.C., February 15, 1941)



Louisa Nicole, M.I.C.

In Japan, my apostolate was at the school where I taught and assumed the leadership. Located in the vicinity of the only Catholic parish in Koriyama, city of two hundred fifty thousand inhabitants in its prosperous years, we had an enrolment of a thousand students, thirty of which were Christians. Recognized as a Catholic school, we had the authorization of the State and parents to teach Scripture and promote Christian values. The school was not a place where we ‘baptized’ but an establishment where we introduced Jesus and His Message and where we taught students to pray to the Loving God. Bible courses were offered to parents and teachers—from within this circle came forth some good Catholic families. The following are some facts which I think are interesting.

WHAT YOU DO SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

Evangelizing does not always mean to “speak” or “tell”. Saint Paul claims that *faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ*. (Ro 10:17) Yes, I taught Scripture, the content of our Faith; it was given to adults, children, teenagers. However, I always made sure that Jesus’ Message would translate into good actions: sharing with the less fortunate of Japan or other countries; forgiveness, acceptance and respecting differences were on the menu of the day. For the Japanese, it is most important to give proof of the evidence.

One day, I contacted a young girl who had been a former student of ours. She had solemnly promised us that after her university studies she would come back

to her 'Alma Mater'. She was excellent in English and I counted on her for a teaching position. I had not searched for any other teacher because the contract was ready for her to sign. She came with her mother bringing a gift according to the custom. With deep bows and hundreds of excuses, I soon became aware that things would not turn out as planned. Indeed, the young girl had passed exams to be admitted at a public school and had succeeded first class. She had committed herself without warning me. What disappointment! I could not hide my dismay, my heart was heavy... I pulled myself together and was then able to say: *That's fine! In a public school you will surely have better chances of moving upward in your career. If you think you will be happy, go in peace, my prayer is with you.* And on this, with hundreds of excuses and compliments, we parted.

I had no knowledge that her mother, for many years, had taken pre-Baptism courses with Sr. Monique Cloutier, one of my MIC companions. She had never taken a decisive step, but after this event she asked to receive the sacrament. When Sr. Monique asked her what motivated her decision, she replied: *The reaction of Sister Directress moved me deeply. Only those who believe in Jesus can react that way. I believe and I want to also follow the path of Jesus.* What a surprise this was for me. The Breath of the Spirit had come across; it was a Pentecost event and I believe it was one of my most wonderful and uplifting moment.

THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES BUDDHISTS AND SHINTOISTS

Teachers had heavy work-loads and tight schedules. After a summer session on Scripture, a small delegation came to me and asked if I could give them additional courses—once a month was not sufficient. With them, I searched and tried to find time, but to no avail. I had to leave it up to them to find a way. Shortly after, they came back and said: *We have found a solution: every morning, at the teachers meet-*

The Spirit of Jesus dwells in the heart of each one... ~

ing, we will read a Scripture passage and end with a prayer composed in the Spirit of the text. I asked: *Who will be in charge?* They answered: *Mrs. Kimura is Catholic and she accepted to do this.* I replied: *Yes, of course, that's a good idea!* We made the move and all went well until the day that Mrs. Kimura was absent. Everyone was numb and didn't know what to do. In this case I said to the teachers: *The Spirit of Jesus dwells in the heart of each one of you and His Spirit can give you the words to pray. Why would you not take turns in praying?* And so it was!

THE BIBLE—AS A GUEST

When I left that school, it had already been seven years that the Bible had been travelling from one office to another, at both the primary and secondary levels. In the evening a teacher would take home the Holy Book, no matter if she was Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist or Shintoist. Every morning, a short Scripture passage was read followed by a prayer inspired by the text or in terms of school events, world-wide concerns, seasonal changes. The prayers were beautiful! At one time I thought of collecting those precious gems and edit them in book form but then I feared this would hinder the spontaneity through which the Spirit of God was made manifest, so the idea never materialized. Though imperceptible yet real, hearts gradually changed. We learned to discover each other and to love each other sincerely; this love radiated and was passed on to our children. For me, those mornings were Easter mornings. Yes, Japan evangelized me. ~

¹ Morning prayer

² Monique Cloutier, M.I.C.

Photos Credit: MIC



Kanyanga Mission Health Centre

By Jacqueline Vachet, M.I.C.

To all the generous 'Friends of Kanyanga' from Canada and all over the world.

Dear Friends,

Currently on home leave in Canada, I take this opportunity, via our MIC website and our magazine, to thank all the generous donors who have responded to the MIC Mission News article: *911 Health Care Emergency* which appeared in the October-December 2011 issue. Many of you have contributed generously to support us financially in buying an ambulance very much needed for the transportation of patients to the District Hospital.

In 2011, we transported 1,473 patients. Most of them were mothers in labor who urgently needed a Cesarean section or children with severe anemia. Malaria causes anemia as it destroys the red blood cells; therefore without an immediate transfusion patients die. It was imperative for us to have an ambulance in good condition; it was a question of life or death!

Perhaps you would be interested in knowing that your financial contributions which amounted to \$23,000 CAN helped us in purchasing a new vehicle; we wholeheartedly thank each one of you who participated in this project. We did, however, have to borrow an extra \$20,000 that was missing. The new ambulance arrived



in December 2012, but now we need to refund the borrowed money; added to this is the \$4,000 US balance that remains to be paid on the repairs that were done on the discarded ambulance. A total of \$24,000 would be needed to clear our debt; can we count on your support once again?

KANYANGA MISSION HEALTH CENTER

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic Canadian Missionary Congregation who founded the Health Care Centre of Kanyanga, Zambia, on June 8, 1957. Located in the Diocese of Chipata, the Centre is 36 kilometers north of Lundazi, Zambia. This town has a population of 17,800 inhabitants with a dispensary and seven government health facilities; they refer their cases to our Mission Health Centre.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

The people of Kanyanga are from the Tumbuka/Ngoni tribe. They uphold their cultural values and are socially active and very supportive. Every year, in October, they have a special ceremony called "Zengani" in memory of Chief Tengaymo. This celebration attracts many people from different areas of the district and the country as a whole. The goal of this event is to bring unity and harmony between the Tumbuka/Ngoni tribes by sharing traditional customs.

Though the soil is not very productive, most people are farmers. They grow cotton, maize, groundnuts. The major cash crop is cotton which has a market with Dunavant and Clark Companies. Besides the farmers there are businessmen who

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deal with everyday commodities such as: soap, cooking oil, matches, etc. A few of these have vehicles and offer transportation because there is no public transit due to the poor road conditions. There are a few dams in the area and fishing is allowed, this is an appreciated food resource. The economic situation is rather vulnerable due to the poor road network and lack of hydropower; however, the people find ways of surviving.

Most of the civil servants (80%) are teachers and are spread out in fourteen schools. Others are agricultural agents, policemen, lawyers, and some serve in the medical field. Wildlife preservation has also become an attraction.

The majority of the population is Christian, few are Muslims. The wide variety of religious traditions exist side by side; the Christian denominations include: Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist and Anglican. Notwithstanding these faith traditions, people retain their cultural beliefs and norms such as sexual cleansing, polygamy and widow inheritance (levirate)¹.

THE MISSION HEALTH CENTRE'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Our Health Care Centre has a capacity of 98 beds but this number was reduced to 76 due to the closing of three isolation wards. But with the outbreak of measles in the region, these wards have reopened to their full capacity. The Centre has 17 staff houses, 5 boreholes, 4 of which are working. The Centre has a solar system for the lighting needs. All the staff houses now have solar power but not all have running water.

Kanyanga Mission Health Care Centre is a **first level referring centre** for seven Government Rural Health Centres or primary health posts. With the financial help of organizations such as Beit Trust (England) and Cordaid (Holland) the personnel houses were built; funds from Global Funding were provided to build a place for the HIV/AIDS ART (**anti retroviral treatment**) program; *Cuore Amico* (Italy) funded the construction of a mothers'



shelter for pregnant women; all these were made possible in conjunction with smaller donors from Austria and Canada as well as from Zambia, through the Constituency Development Fund.

CHALLENGES

- **Human Resources:** The Centre is undergoing a critical staff shortage and much work needs to be done.
- **Drug Shortage:** We lack important essential drugs including anti-malarial medication.
- **Transportation:** Kanyanga takes in all emergency cases from the surrounding health centres or posts, such as women having childbirth problems; we drive the patients to the Lundazi District Hospital. However, good will is not sufficient, poor road conditions and underfunding are signs of a depleted system.

SUCCESS STORIES

- Kanyanga Mission Health Centre has been evaluated by the Performance Assessment and was acknowledged as the best in the district.
- During the CHAZ² annual general meeting, our Centre received an award for having been the country's first medical centre to implement the ART program for HIV patients.
- It has been acknowledged that Kanyanga Mission Health Centre offers quality health care services to the population and the qualified support personnel has at heart to live by our motto: the wish we have for each one who comes to us — **IN THE NAME OF JESUS BE HEALED** ~

¹ Pediatrician appointment

² Nursery Ward

Photos Credit: MIC

¹ Levirate: a custom of the ancient Hebrews and other peoples by which a man has to marry his brother's widow.

² Churches Health Association of Zambia



Can Faith Be Silenced?

With its magnificent fine white sandy beaches, its lush tropical flora, its unique, colorful culture, its capital and history, Cuba presents itself as a charming island—most appealing to tourists. Behind such attractions there is another facet of Cuba perhaps unknown to visitors. Sr. Bernardeta, M.I.C. and her brother Jose Enrique speak to us of their first-hand faith experience. The door is open, let us enter.

SR. BERNARDETA COLLAZO'S TESTIMONY

In Cuba we often say: *Come in, the door is open!* It's a popular expression which means: *You are at home here! Have no doubt.*

THE GIFT OF FAITH

While I was visiting in Canada and sharing a meal with some Sisters, we talked about the precious gift of faith. Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI gave us a beautiful gift when he wrote his letter entitled "Porta Fidei"¹ but... the real gift is FAITH itself. This is a God given grace which is personally accepted and welcomed. Myself, being a Cuban and living in a socialist country, I am often asked: *How do you live your faith in the midst of a Marxist-Leninist and Atheist nation?*

My reply to this question is simply that faith is a Divine gift that cannot be crushed, nor killed, nor eradicated. I don't know if theologians would agree with this affirmation, but according to me it is a reality. It is almost impossible to kill the

faith which is deeply rooted in someone's soul; physically we can destroy a person, but we cannot annihilate a person's faith.

FAITH AT THE HEART OF A PERSON

I saw my people, my compatriots, give-up their religious practice and abandoning their faith. Nevertheless, years have gone by and the faith lives-on at the deepest core of the human being. Many individuals have come back to their Christian community, they ask to be part of the Catholic Church; they search for God in a simple but sure way.

A WELL-ROOTED DEVOTION

My ministry takes place in a sanctuary inside the Diocesan Basilica, Our Lady of Charity, the patroness of Cuba. Popular devotion has always been a part of our roots and it is Our Lady of Charity who draws her spiritual children to God. We've just lived through a Marian Jubilee

¹ The Door of Faith

Year, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Virgin of Charity of El Cobra, the country's most revered icon. It is estimated that more than half the population, some six million people turned out on the streets to welcome their Mother. The replica toured every corner of the Cuban Archipelago. The theme selected for the Marian Jubilee Year was: *To Jesus through Mary, charity unites us.*

FERVENT BELIEVERS

What amazes me the most are the eyes of the pilgrims who come to the sanctuary; the first thing they look for, as they enter the church, is the image of Our Lady of Charity. Standing or kneeling before her, they fix their whole attention on Our Lady; their heart goes out to her and with either tears or small gestures they express their feelings. Nothing around them can disturb their prayer. This phenomenon speaks of the faith of a people. They deeply believe that their Mother in Heaven hears them, she protects them, she intercedes for them and she walks this earthly journey with them. They praise and thank her because they know that their requests will be granted.

WITNESSING THE TRUE FAITH

As Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, what is our mission in Cuba? In the most difficult years, the most trying times, we thought the faith would altogether disappear from the hearts of people. Nonetheless, we remained in communion with the Church; we continued announcing the Good News of Jesus, the Son of God, the only Savior. We left the “doors open” and continued inviting people to join the community of believers. Many individuals feared manifesting their faith publicly. Today, we evangelize our society in communion with the universal Church. Integrated and one with the people, we try to be witnesses of the faith, the authentic faith which comes from the heart and opens us to a personal spiritual experi-

ence—encountering Jesus of the Gospel. We are witnesses of our Institute's charism—we are missionaries of Thanksgiving who joyfully sing Mary's Magnificat.

Yes, in this *Year of Faith*, let us consider and respond to this heart-warming invitation: *Come in, the door is open, you are at home here.*

JOSE ENRIQUE COLLAZO'S TESTIMONY

Sister Bernardeta presented to us her experience of how living the faith has evolved during and after the revolution in her country. Her brother, Jose Enrique now tells us his version which is also a “Porta Fidei”.

I am a Catholic lay person dedicated to an apostolate whose main goal is teaching, orienting and guiding my compatriots on the road to faith in God. The best demonstration is to have the kind of faith that awakens the curiosity of those who observe the Christians. One day, at a highly reputable research center, a person whose talent and success brilliantly shined, asked me: *You know, for a certain period of time I have been observing a Christian and I am struck by his disposition. Every morning he is in good shape as if nothing had happened the day before, as if there were no burden for him to carry. What do you do to be this way?* I replied: *At night, we review how we've lived the day: In God's presence, we look at the events of the day be they pleasant or unpleasant, we pray for a while and we ask the Lord's help, then we leave the rest in His Hands, come what may.* Somewhat surprised, he smiled and said he would take a couple of days to think about my statement. One morning, he called me aside and said: *What you told me seems logical.* His convinced smile spoke for itself. Then my Cuban friend quoted Santiago del Cura, a Spanish theologian: *That God may appear as the fullness of life, it is important to experience God's presence from within, only those who have communed with God can truly transmit and communicate a heightened “taste” for the things of God.* ☪

Young people praying together
Photo Credit: MIC

Dawn Of A New Life



Lucie Derome, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Rupert) 1921-2012
Montreal, Quebec

In her memoirs, Sister Lucie wrote that when she was young she offered her morning prayer in these words: *My God, I give you my heart.* On September third, she found the One whom her heart loved.

Coming from a devout Catholic family,

Lucie entered our Institute at the age of twenty-one. As a nurse and pharmacist, she worked at our hospital, Mount Saint Joseph, in Vancouver, B.C. The MIC health-care unit in Laval, Quebec also benefitted of her competence. Committed to pastoral ministry, Sister worked with immigrants within a parish context. Wherever she was, her heart reached out to others. Thank you, Sr. Lucie!



Alice Mills, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Mathias) 1937-2012
Edmunston, New-Brunswick

The religious spirit of her family as well as her attraction for the missions explains why Alice chose to enter our Institute on August 8, 1959. Excellent teacher, she inspired her students to be goal oriented.

In Malawi, she taught English at Katete's

Teacher Training College and at Marymount Secondary School, Mzuzu. Later, Sr. Alice was appointed to Japan. Upon her return, she worked as executive secretary for the Canadian Council of churches. During the last twelve years of her life she served at the Marriage Tribunal Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. You have achieved your goal, dear Sister Alice; may you now rest in the Lord's Peace.



Thérèse Bernier, M.I.C.
(Sr. Philippe-du-Sauveur)
1913-2012
East Angus, Quebec

Our Institute welcomed Thérèse on August 8, 1933. Having had a happy childhood, her missionary journey was just as joyful and successful. In Quebec as well as in Cuba, her dynamism and

competence in the field of teaching were remarkable. Then, at Totonicapan, Guatémala, her organizational skills benefitted a poor indigenous village. Following a violent earthquake, Sister multiplied her requests for funds from various organizations and with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency, eighteen schools, a dispensary and four cultural centers were built. Upon her return to Quebec, Sister Thérèse could say: I have lived heaven on earth.

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

— Délia Tétreault



Jeannette Légaré, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte-Agnès) 1922-2012
Montreal, Quebec

Sr. Jeannette was a missionary gem in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Her discreet, quiet, cordial approach in the apostolic field and her expertise in Catechesis were appealing to many who crossed her path. Sister's Christian Faith took root

within her family circle and at the age of twenty she joined the MIC Institute. She had a remarkable talent—her contemplative soul inspired her to make wax baby Jesus figurines which were ravishing and unique. During the last years of her life, former Chinese students came to pay their respect and thanked her for her many years of dedication. For your multifaceted life, thank you Sr. Jeannette.



Marguerite Cloutier, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marie-Donalda) 1922-2012
Montreal, Quebec

Marguerite received a Christian education and devoted many years of her youth to the Catholic Action Movement; she entered our Institute at twenty-two. Qualified in domestic science, she taught many African women ways to earn a living.

At first, courses were given in a temporary shelter; later, a proper area was built and equipped with sewing machines and necessary tools needed for teaching. Sr. Marguerite's ingenious ways of doing things were of no compare. She had no problems with gardening: flowers, fruits, vegetables were abundant and neighbors soon discovered her talents. Shared planning and distribution made many happy people. Sr. Marguerite, your serenity and trust revealed God's unconditional Love.

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An Invitation

*Look to life with beauty in
your eyes!*

*Look to life with peace in
your heart!*

*Look to life with harmony
in your soul!*

*Then, in a vocal silence,
your loving God will speak
to you at the very core of
your being.*

*Listen well, be silent
and be still!*

C.L.B.

