

MIC

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MISSION NEWS



To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

CANADA

A LAND OF GREAT
EXPECTATIONS

BOLIVIA

DID YOU SEE ME?

IN FOCUS

Sign Detectors



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS - 2013

JULY

FOR ASIA — *We pray that throughout Asia doors may open to all messengers of the Gospel.*

AUGUST

FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH IN AFRICA — *We pray that the local Church in Africa may promote justice and peace by faithfully proclaiming the Gospel.*

SEPTEMBER

FOR CHRISTIANS SUFFERING PERSECUTION — *We pray that Christians suffering persecution in many parts of the world may, by their witness, be prophets of Christ's love.*

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January: *Canada*

February: *Cuba*

March: *Philippines*

April: *Haiti*

May: *Canada*

June: *Bolivia*

July: *Malawi and Zambia*

August: *Hong Kong and Taiwan*

September: *Madagascar*

October: *Peru*

November: *Japan*

December: *Canada*



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EDITORIAL

Become A Meaningful Sign!

A sign is a mark, a movement, a shape intended to have a particular meaning. It transmits a message, it indicates, it orients, it can even provoke. Signs are all around us, sometimes they attract our attention but most of the time we are unaware of them.

Jesus often used signs (miracles) to reveal His Divinity; He even raised Lazarus from the dead. It seems that if we had been there, we would have believed! To believe, we need not look for extraordinary signs. We have eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to love; these are means through which we can capture the signs of God's presence in our midst.

How often I have seen in the metro or on the bus individuals giving their seat to someone else, or young people helping an elderly person, or teachers working overtime to help students, or someone exhibiting goodness, gentleness, love towards others. These are all signs.

The Church also offers us signs through the sacraments; these signs tell us that grace is at work within the soul. For Christians the greatest sign is the symbolic ritual gesture of the Cross. When we make the sign of the Cross we transmit the fundamental message of our faith. Precisely, by the glorious Cross we become children of God and eternal life is given to us. It is not an automatic sign but it is the mark of our faith.

In this issue, you will discover simple signs that reveal God's infinite love particularly so in the article—*Did you see me? asked God*. During this summer season, let us detect God's creative presence so that in turn we may become meaningful signs. Profoundly convinced of God's revealing Love, we can be bearers of Light and of Hope. Let us heed our Pope Francis' words who said to the Cardinals during his first homily in the Sistine Chapel: *If we do not confess Jesus Christ, it is no good. We will become a humanitarian NGO, but not the Church, the bride of the Lord*. Let us therefore be authentic agents of the Word who witness, in all simplicity, the love of Christ for humanity.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

Mother Délia not only saw signs of God everywhere but she also discovered His Will. She invited her Sisters and others to do the same and she would speak about it:

As you admire this magnificent scenery, the beautiful lake, the mountains afar, the pine forest, do you stop to think of our Heavenly Father who created all these for his creatures that we may give Him glory? (MIC Archives, Testimony-No.169)

Enjoy all the beautiful things you see. Give thanks to Our Lord who has made them for you. (July 15, 1913)

The magnificent nature displayed before your eyes all along the trip commanded gratitude. (May 31, 1921)

Solitude and the beauty of nature are most favorable to spiritual life. (September 16, 1907)

We do not have to worry about lacking the necessities of life. God will always be there, He, who nourishes the birds and even looks after the humble flower of the fields. (July 18, 1904)

I am not the one who rules the events; I try to discover the Divine Will, to follow it myself and to have it followed by those God has entrusted to me. (June 19, 1922)

If you are attentive, you will find this adorable Will everywhere. With Sister Marie-de-la-Providence, be missionaries of this devotion of devotions. To have a taste for all that God wants, what a grace this is! (April 6, 1917)

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André Gadbois

OBSERVE THE VITAL SIGNS

In His time, Jesus knew how to detect the vital signs emitted by His contemporaries. Today, His disciples have lost this “talent” which consists in being vigilant, patient and attentive.



One of the great qualities which scouts of yesteryears tried to develop was that of observation—a sharp eye, patience and vigilance. The scout founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell gave it a capital importance; he taught scouts to be observant of all signs including discovering God in their everyday life and dealings. The activities were numerous: walking along trail signs, star gazing and observation, Kim’s games, navigating with a compass and map relay. These and many more allowed young people of the time to be attentive, present to people, to nature and to the Divine inner space. In Jesus’ days, scouts did not exist, but I humbly think that Jesus was the perfect scout of His time. In the four gospels we read words that Jesus spoke, such as: be vigilant, be watchful, look, observe, open your eyes... To all those who wanted to be His disciples, Jesus invited them to be attentive, to see, to be awake at all times making sure that the inner flame be kept bright and not allowed to die.

Wherever He went, along the lake shore, in a field, in a house, in a fishing boat, on a mountain top, Jesus observed with His eyes and listened with His ears, He watched over His own and would cite them as examples of beauty and humanism. Jesus did not use a technique, or a doctrine, nor would He give rote learning answers. His approach was more like that of a poet than a guru. His examples were taken from the world of shepherds, fishermen, vine growers and the ordinary daily

Jesus knew how to
detect the signs, the
callings and messages.



life in a village. Different from the high priests, the Scribes and Pharisees of His time who denounced and lectured their people, Jesus simply presented Himself as the One who washed the feet of those who came to Him wearied, heavy hearted from life's burdens, crushed by the problems too great for them to carry.

Without any doubt, meeting Jesus in Galilee, in Judea or in Samaria was an experience like no other; it was like a massage which soothed all knots—that of the heart, of the mind, of the body and of the soul. Meeting Jesus was an experience which warmed a person's disappointed, humiliated, bound, cold heart. Jesus could perceive the vital signs of the woman or man in front of Him refusing to be distracted by the evidence, the surface, or the misdemeanor. His tenderness was a footpath into the heart of the person before Him. Jesus knew how to detect the signs, the callings and messages. He was attentive, a quality or a competence which is being lost in our hyper, excited society and our Church in crisis. Excited or in crisis, can we be patient, attentive, vigilant observers? Can we bypass the labels, the gossips so as to welcome and journey with the person who is seeking happiness? What does the Spirit of the Word mean as expressed through Jesus: *I have come that they may have life and have it to the full?* (Jn 10:10)

As He observed His contemporaries, while being vigilant and patient in their presence, while avoiding all condemnation

and exclusion, Jesus decoded the existence of each one. He proposed no catechism, no code of conduct. He discerned their capacity to hear while respecting their otherness. He knew how to be of service in their personal quest for truth, in their thirst and hunger for greater things; Jesus relied on the vital signs they demonstrated. Before His death, He invited His closest friends, those who would continue His Mission to be inspired by Him and nourished of Him in order to heal and reconcile. What have we done with Jesus' counsels and pedagogy? What have we done with His gratuitousness, His poverty, His simplicity, His passion for the little ones of this world?

What do we need the most in this world? It is not to be normal, but to be loved; it is to have someone who believes in us beyond our poor human condition and weaknesses, while respecting our personal secret.¹ As we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, we must detect the signs which are emitted by those who circulate around us and who are in our midst, not to win them over on our side or to show the strength and superiority of the Church but rather to help them rediscover their beauty and dignity. In turn, this beauty will blossom as it reaches out to others to serve and bring about beauty in their world. ∞

¹ VANIER, Jean, *The Signs of the Times in the Light of Vatican II*, Albin Michel, Paris 2013

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A LAND OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The author was a missionary in Bolivia for fifteen years. Communications and the promotion of native women were her fields of interest. Sister Monique experienced what it is like to be uprooted from one's country and she knows the ups and downs of integration into a new culture. Life moves us forward, a fact that is portrayed in this article as the author relates her encounter with two immigrant women. One is originally from Tunisia, the other from Morocco, both are Muslims. For the International Day of Women, they were invited to the Mother House of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, in Montreal, to share their experience of integration in their new country.

By Monique Bigras, M.I.C.

No place is more beautiful than my own country! Having to leave it is like amputating a corner of one's heart. Nothing can really replace my land, my house... and yet, at times the only choice that remains is to emigrate. It is not easy to part from our homeland; Lamia and Nadia are living through the experience.

Two names, two faces, two hearts which crossed our path of life. They came, Lamia from Tunisia, Nadia from Morocco. The Maghreb, with its large stretch of desert sands and majestic palm trees will forever remain in their memories.

They came to share with us their sorrows, their joys, their obstacles, their challenges and all that leads them to believe that tomorrow will be better. During the two hours together, the heart expresses itself; signs of hope and universality can be detected.

WHY CHOOSE TO EMIGRATE?

The reasons are many, but first on the list is the well-being and future of the children. In the Maghreb region, jobs are scarce and unemployment insurance is non-existent. School fees are high and salaries are too low even for a qualified teacher.

Because of political and financial insecurities it is difficult to set aside savings for the future or to realize their dream. These are a few reasons why people opt for immigration notwithstanding the heartbreaking parting with family members.

Upon the invitation of relatives and friends of theirs who were already well settled here, Lamia and Nadia chose to come to Canada, in particular Quebec. The French language was for them an important and determining factor. It is also true that Canada easily accepts qualified immigrants. Many factors are considered when immigrants choose Canada: security for them and their children, the government support and social benefits, formation sessions upon their arrival such as: learning about the labor-market, how to write their curriculum-vitae, Francization courses... There are other positive elements: pursuing their studies, easy access to information, organizations that support the immigrants materially (lodging, food, clothing, etc) as well as morally. All these services are of a great help besides opening doors that favor integration. Without delay, the children are also integrated in the school system. To improve the students'

**PHOTO (left to right):**Lamia, Sr Lucille¹, Nadia

Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

¹ Lucille LaSalle, M.I.C. is a missionary who reaches out to all. For the past 15 years she has been working at PROMIS where immigrants from 119 different countries mix and interact. Within the Immigrants' Network, Sr. Lucille supports families during the process of integration, helping them to live harmoniously together.

knowledge of their heritage language, many school boards offer the P.E.L.O. (Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine); as the children continue learning about their mother tongue, they are initiated gradually to the language of their classmates. School buses are also available. What a privilege!

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN —THE CHALLENGES

Along the immigrants' route there are detours, stumbling blocks, challenges; the newly arrived must roll up their sleeves with courage. Upon arrival their first goal is to find work, but they are asked: *Did you receive your training in Quebec? Do you have a working experience here in Quebec?* You can imagine the reply after only a few months on Quebec soil. Luckily, volunteer work is recognized. With determination, they begin volunteering and gradually climb one step at a time—helping children with their school work, serving dinners at the school cafeteria; taking some complementary formation is also on their program. For them, French is a second language, they can speak it but writing is a problem. They must also find a family doctor which is not easy; this problem does not exist in their country

where doctors are more available and waiting time is shorter.

Both women speak the Arab language and are Muslims; maintaining their religious values in a multicultural context is more difficult. The greatest challenge is met by the children; everyday they interact with their peers who have other values, religious or not. Students are attracted by the Feasts and festivities such as Christmas, Halloween...; they participate with their classmates without sacrificing the religious beliefs of the Coran.

IF IT WERE TO BE DONE AGAIN...

... the choice would be the same. There is the belief that immigrants can integrate into a new society while keeping their own identity, language, and religion as long as they maintain an open spirit and respect differences. This sharing when viewed with the heart is a source of growth and of mutual enrichment. A new world, vibrant in color and texture is taking shape. A world where I will be, where you will be, and together we will walk to build a land where children will be free, without fear, to laugh, dance, and love each other.

A new world is calling us... can we detect the signs? 🌿

MODERN CONTEMPLATION



Émilien Roscanu
is a member of the
Editorial Team for
the magazine:
MIC Mission News/
Le Précurseur.

A musical note, a mechanical vibration directly in our pocket; a message has just come in from somewhere. The world stops! Could it be a co-worker who asks to be replaced or a boss demanding that a report be given in without delay? Could it be a family member in need or the co-tenant who forgot to buy milk? No matter, the next few seconds of our attention will be drawn to this metal and plastic gadget. The message is read, the reply is sent, and life goes on. Constantly in communication with others and with the world, we can accomplish multiple tasks all at once. However, every now and then, it is vital to leave behind these gadgets or devices so as to take time to imagine, to contemplate nature's beauty and try to detect the signs of God—signs which are sometimes buried within the self but are there to help, to guide and to advise us along the way.

We are the only ones who can
discover the 'true self'. ~

ALONE WITH ONE'S SELF

New technologies have made their entry into our lives and will probably not leave us soon; therefore, better for us to use them wisely. Man must control the machine and not the reverse. From time to time, he must be able to find ways to separate from it. Every summer, I take time-out and stay at the family's summer cottage in a small Laurentian village. There, I break away from the rest of the world. The cell phone remains shut most of the

time; there is no television, no computer to interfere with the sought-after solitude. I appreciate the fresh air, the beauty of the river, the birds singing somewhere in the majestic trees. Outside this haven of peace the rest of the world continues turning and who knows if it is even aware of my temporary absence. I contemplate the beauty of nature and I must say that no cell phone or on-line social network can offer me the equivalent. Direct contact with the elements of nature leads me inward; it is an occasion to reflect, to be in touch with my inner self, and to reach a privileged level of consciousness. Such a contemplative and reflective state cannot be reached when we are plunged in turbulent life activities and immediate concerns.

But our technological devices are linked to these two concepts. They allow us to be informed instantly and to be efficient at all times. To find a word definition, to find what film your friend likes best, to know the latest gossip or news are concrete ways to be informed but are of no avail to acquire self-knowledge, or to reflect on one's purpose in life and find one's true place on planet Earth. *Know thy self* said Socrates. We are the only ones who can discover the 'true self' and no technical device can do it for us. To grow as a human person, the introspection exercise is a must. Deep within our inner self we are able to hear the signs and experience that we are not alone; there is a Presence which is heartwarming and helps us to overcome all trials no matter what they are.

THE HUMAN CONTACT

We often praise the new technologies; we say that there is no more distance between us. We have a brother in Ouagadougou, a sister in Istanbul, a friend in Buenos Aires, nothing stops us from communicating with them instantly; there are no more geographical limits. Our sophisticated devices are very useful. They transmit with quality an image and a direct sound, but one thing they cannot reproduce is the human touch. Nothing can compare with the physical presence or direct contact with family or friend. In a virtual conversation an invisible wall is set between the speakers which can hamper the authentic sharing of emotions and state of mind. Though a conversation via videoconference can have a certain spiritual value, the human contact is essential in a relationship where two persons aspire to see beyond the appearance. The same goes for the social networking. Having hundreds of friends on a social network cannot equal having a one true friend. A virtual contact only skims the surface of a relationship between humans. To develop strong ties, time must be given to a person in order to know the individuals' qualities and shortcomings, values and dreams. Such a condition is necessary to truly have a solid, well-grounded relationship with someone. The "time-out" period is precisely the basis which leads a person to admire the other's beauty and full potentials.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation has been in practice for centuries while the new technologies in communication are quite recent; the latter has become more democratic for approximately the last twenty years. With this new phenomenon, contacts between humans and between humans and nature have been shattered. Though the new technologies offer us advantages, let us remain who we truly are. Let us not isolate ourselves behind a screen, a social network, or virtual masked appearances, but let us keep our capacity to admire and marvel. Let us be attentive to the signs of God's presence which He reveals all around us and within us. ∞



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- > indicate: one-time donation/ monthly donation

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Already on the Web's highway since October 1999, we, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC) have updated our website in order to give you access to greater content and functionalities. The accessibility and the navigation have been improved. It is now easier to contact us, to learn more about our missions, to discover our Foundress Délia Tétréault, or to encourage us in our projects. Our 'You Tube' personalized account allows you to view hours of exclusive content: you are able to consult the archives to find past issues, read the articles or editorials you are looking for, you can find sections of the current issue, you are also able to comment on the articles in the section to this effect. If you wish to know about the people who collaborate in producing the magazine, a brief biography of each one is presented. Moreover, it is now easier to make donations to the community via our secure online payment methods.

In order to be at the cutting-edge of technology, a Quick Response Code (similar to a barcode) has been installed on the back cover of our magazine *MIC Mission News*. You can scan this code with a 'smart phone' and you will be automatically redirected to our new MIC website.

N.B. Due to our budget constraint, the Board of Directors of the MIC Missionary Press decided to suspend the production of the 2013-2014 calendar.
— *The Management*



Sign Detectors

And the Pharisees said : What are we to do with this man (Jesus) who performs all sorts of signs? If we let him go on like this, the whole world will believe in him. (John 11: 47-48)

*Through You, Jesus our Savior, the blind saw the light,
Reveal to us Your Presence.*

*You have loosed the tongue of the dumb,
Teach us to give You praise.*

*You opened the ears of the deaf,
Keep us attentive to Your Word.*

*You healed the paralytic,
Show us the way to walk in Your Love.*

*You brought forth Lazarus from the tomb,
Bring to life those that sin holds in death.*

(Liturgy of the Hours (Fr. p. 287))

Ready to Fly to the Father

The Ivory Coast is where Josée Bailly was born and raised. She lived in France and studied international law. Passionately, she loves God and humanity. Josée greatly desires to transmit to the world, the great and the small, the notion of God's greatness and goodness.

By Josée Bailly

THE WILL TO FLY TO THE FATHER

A few years ago, while I was sitting alone in a church in France, I prayed and thanked God for His goodness. At that time, I was a student preparing my thesis in international law. In retrospect I saw my life as it unfolded, surrounded by a warm family atmosphere on the Ivory Coast; then I thought of my life in France with my family and lover. I lacked nothing though sometimes I have known certain sufferings. I could have plunged into a chaotic lifestyle, but the Lord safeguarded me, made me strong so as to serve Him. When I came to understand that Jesus was calling me to serve Him, my heart rejoiced, the same joy which I felt when I was baptized at the age of seven.

TAKING FLIGHT

When I shared with my grandmother the thought that God was calling me to religious life, she began dancing and praising God. I was happy to see such joy. My grandmother asked me what I would do with my diploma. I answered that I would use it to be of service to God.

I called the director who guided me while I wrote my thesis. He told me that if I felt a calling to work as Mother Teresa, I had to listen to my heart and respond accordingly. When I hung up, I felt peace.

I was like the bird ready to fly to the Father.

A BROKEN WING

The time had come to tell my mother and my sister about my desire to become

a religious but they did not share my joy. My mother and other members of the family could not understand that serving God is the greatest of graces. My mother was stunned and I was sad. It was as if one of my wings had been broken. Then I thought of my lover, Sébastien. The little bird felt it had its second wing weakened.

A Nun gave me the address of the *Little Sisters of the Assumption in Paris*. I contacted the one responsible and I came to meet her.

IN A CAGE

I lived two months with the *Little Sisters of the Assumption* and I saw how much peace there is in serving the Lord. I prayed with the Nuns and I lived their way of life. I was so happy! However, one day, the Sister who accompanied me said that it would be better if I returned home from where I came and that if I was truly called to religious life, I would come back. I left and found work as assistant director in a hostel for youth; I was there nine months. I had everything I needed, yet I was not happy. I felt like a caged-in bird. I left the hostel.

SEARCHING FOR THE PATH LEADING TO THE FATHER

Where was God calling me to serve Him? I had no idea.

I thought of Africa, but my request remained without a reply. A friend spoke to me about Quebec. At first, I ignored the suggestion but then I wanted so much





Sr. Agathe told me that the spirituality of the MIC Sisters is one of Thanksgiving. ~

to fly to the Father that I took up the challenge thinking: Why not? If I must go via Quebec to reach the Father, let His Will be done! Perhaps Quebec will offer me the gateway?

In Quebec I learned to discover at a greater depth the God I wanted to serve. But I was still attached to my family as well as my desire to live as a couple with Sébastien. I felt I had to choose between God and Sébastien; I had to stop looking behind if truly I wanted to be free to spread my wings and fly.

THE JOY OF FLYING TO THE FATHER

I had come to a point where I did not know what to do in order to reach the Father. Then I met the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* but thought they were the *Congregation of the Sisters of St Anne* who has missions in Haiti. One of my desires was to go work in Haiti. I joined a group of lay missionaries under the leadership of Sister Agathe. While attending my first seminar I again felt the call to religious life. A speaker by the name of Sister Viviane shared her mission experience and said that she was first and foremost a missionary. During the night I asked myself: *Why do I want to be a missionary?* My response was because I love God, I am attached to Him, I want to take care of His children, I want to spread His Love and make Him known throughout the world.

I met Sister Agathe and spoke to her about my desire of becoming a religious

and the joy I felt about thinking of becoming a Nun. I kept dreaming about the day I would say “yes” to the Lord Jesus, and that gave me great joy.

All my life I thanked God for everything, for myself and for others. One day someone asked a Nun what she thought about me and her reply was: “Josée always expresses her thanks to God!”

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THANKSGIVING

During a conversation, Sr. Agathe told me that the spirituality of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* is one of Thanksgiving. My heart being always so thankful, I couldn’t ask for better. I also learned that their Foundress, Délia Tétreault wanted to give God children who would sing His praise. When I heard that, I smiled.

I know that on the road leading me to the Father there will be storms and blizzards, but the little bird is at peace; it has found its ways to the Father, there is no more fear.

With others, I will fly to the Father come what may. Notwithstanding the obstacles, I will sow seeds of joy and of happiness for all, the little and the great. Through pastoral work, writing and giving thanks, I will help God’s children to go to the Father where in Him there is joy, life and peace in profusion. ~

PHOTO:

Josée Bailly, author

Credit: Sébastien Lamigeon

Keeping Their Lamps Burning

In 1991, upon her return from Peru, Sr. Thérèse decided to update her knowledge. From St. Paul's University in Ottawa, Ontario, she obtained a Master's degree in Missiology, and completed her studies in Theology with a focus on the four evangelists. From 1994 to 1999, she went to the Island of Chiloé, Chile; she worked full time with the Fiscales and accompanied the animators of the radio station "Estrella del mar" founded and directed by Msgr. Juan Luis Ysern.

By Thérèse Lebeau, M.I.C.

According to me, being a witness of *signs* is a unique experience that can never be forgotten. It is a moving encounter leading to a greater adventure. *When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch"* (Luke 5:4). I wish to share the experience I had at Chiloé which is the largest island of the Chiloé Archipelago off the coast of Chile. Here, my missionary work left an indelible mark on my life and it is here that I discovered authentic witnesses of God's Word whom we call *Fiscales*.¹

WHO ARE THEY?

The *Fiscales* are men and women who commit themselves on behalf of their Faith. This group was officially created on December 17, 1621 and ever since lay people, chosen by the parish priest and under his guidance, fulfill their pastoral ministry. Their mandate is usually three years renewable if the pastor and community members are satisfied with their services.

The work of the *Fiscales* is indispensable in these distant and scattered islands where bad weather does not facilitate travelling; when missionaries cannot reach their destinations, these lay people ensure the pastoral animation. The *Fiscales* have been recognized as responsible for the

Basic Christian Communities. They date back to the missionary presence, especially the Jesuits, who four hundred years ago set up the 'circular missions' of the Chiloé Archipelago. This method of evangelization produced amazing results as the 'circular missions' advocated secular responsibility and intensified the faith.

During the temperate months, the missionaries navigated from one island to another and trained the future leaders of the local communities. These *Fiscales* were guardians of the Faith, proclaimed the Word of God and ministered to the basic spiritual needs of the local community throughout the year. Up to this day, three storey high church steeples, a symbol of Faith in the Trinity, are tangible signs of the missionaries who once came this way; they left their mark behind!

A FLAME KEPT ALIVE

In dioceses, the *Fiscales* have a privileged place in pastoral planning. In fact, this "pre-Vatican II" institution gives much importance to lay men and women who are dedicated to the mission of evangelization. Thanks to their diligent work, the Word of God reached populations living in remote areas of Chiloé's Archipelago and the flame is kept alive, burning brightly. It is a tangible sign of the Word of God: *I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!* (Lk 12:49)

Nowadays, the *Fiscales* receive a more thorough formation and are accompanied during their training years. This is due in part to the 1993 synod assembly which took on three major orientations:

- Sustain the organization and the formation of all *Fiscales* that they be better prepared to Evangelize and form solid missionary communities;
- Offer a progressive and permanent formation that will allow the *Fiscales* to develop their leadership skills in terms of Evangelizing the basic communities;
- Help the *Fiscales* to deepen their identity as Disciples of Jesus Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit and called to serve the members of the community they inspire the people to work for the reign of God.

The true mission of the Church: *Go and make disciples of all nations...* (Mt 28:19) took on a deeper meaning for me as I journeyed with the *Fiscales*. It is to be said that many cultures have been enriched by the Gospel message which has been proclaimed for centuries, the heroic missionary work which went on from generation to generation has left its signs. Fr. Achiel Peelman, O.M.I., once wrote: *The Gospel has this extraordinary capacity to work within the cultures and bring forth an inner faith response which surpasses all our expectations and predictions—we thus experience the mystery of inculturation.*²

A DIVINE PRESENCE

Besides presiding at liturgical services and being present on important occasions highlighting the Christian life, many *Fiscales* have taken courses in catechesis. With this formation they are qualified to accompany the children and young people who are preparing for their First Communion and Confirmation.

Each Christian community keeps growing in Faith and this is thanks to the generous work of the Catechists. Msgr Juan-Luis Ysern, now retired, spoke to the faithful of his diocese in these terms: *The small communities must be centers of*

true spirituality where each one, united with others, pray and become strong in the grace of God, always seeking His Divine Will (...) It must be a place where each one revitalizes their Faith life and commit to live it in all its realities.

*(...) All must help each other to live the Faith! We will search for ways to better serve the poor and journey with them along the path of dignity...*³

HOPE IN GOD'S PEOPLE

We are hopeful that the Church of Chiloé will encourage the work of men and women who are prepared to collaborate in revitalizing the Church of Jesus Christ so that the needs of our contemporary world may be met.

It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that today's burning flame may never be extinguished. To keep the enthusiasm, renewed spiritual accompaniment is of greatest value. Even though the MIC Community had to regretfully leave this mission in January of 2008, the Associates of the Institute (AsMIC) continue being actively committed to their mission. I wish to express my deep gratitude to all the Sisters who worked with the Church of Chiloé especially two Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sr. Nancy Campos and Sr. Manuela Vélasquez who are originally from Chiloé. ☞

¹ *Fiscales*: Spanish word

² PEELMAN, Achiel, Journal: *L'Église Canadienne*, April 1990, 235

³ YSERN, Juan-Luis, Msgr., Ancud Chiloé, *Pastoral Letter*, August 29, 1997, 3 & 8

PHOTOS:

¹ Church of Degan (Ancud)

Three storey tower, symbol of the Trinity
Credit: T. Lebeau, M.I.C.

² Returning from her mission work, Sr. Thérèse waves to the people.

Credit: J. Mairlet





Did You See Me? Asked God

By Anita Perron, M.I.C.

In our spring issue, April-June 2013, the Institute of Rural Education in Bolivia was spoken about; perhaps the story delighted many of our readers. In this summer issue, Sr. Anita invites us to capture the face of God which is revealed to her at the Institute as well as in people whom she encounters along the way. She has seen God... and the following is her reply.

The Institute of Rural Education (IER) is a boarding school which welcomes more than eighty women from villages; some are seventeen years of age, while others are older. Surrounded by flowers, fruits and their vegetable garden, these students are accompanied by Sr. Cipriana Ccahuana, M.I.C., who is their counselor and by Vilma Penafiel who is their teacher.

It is here that these young women acquire the knowledge necessary to obtain a high school diploma. They can also learn a trade which will later help them earn a living and be of service to their local community. Their years of formation are equally favorable in developing their natural talents; opportunities invite them to be committed, perseverant, and socially involved. After graduation, some are elected as counselors in their municipalities, others become teachers in computer science; some women decide to open their own sewing shop, while others become veterinary technicians or nurses. The latter are very much needed in the remote regions of the country.

The students at the Institute have opted to be part of a great movement—that is, to generate a better world. As I observe them, I see the feminine face of God reflecting tenderness, joy, commit-

ment especially where life and freedom are threatened.

TRULY, I HAVE SEEN YOU THERE

No need to wear sunglasses to see You, Lord, because Your Presence is so discreet. However, in Isaiah 45:19, You declare: *I have not said: seek Me in vain.* True, when we seek You, we find You. Your rays of beauty and freshness filter through our natural environment. Here, where I have been living for the past fifteen years, I perceive You through this lovely nature and through all of your creation.

I have seen You Lord, on the many faces of couples who thirst for spiritual life as they walk together the path of life. On his spiritual journey, Marcelo can see a reflection of Your tolerance and patient love on the face of his wife Danitza. Another spouse by the name of Lourdes, acknowledges that Javier has helped her draw nearer to God; through his faith, he detected the sign of God's presence even in the most critical situations.

Expressions of Your tenderness are reflected in the eyes of a young couple, Mildred and Santiago. They remind us of Your identity which is LOVE; a loving couple is the symbol of God's unconditional love for all human beings. Scripture says: *Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death* (Song 8:6).



Teresa and Mario are deeply impressed by their four year old son, Mauricio; playing by himself, he took a cord and traced a huge heart on the ground. Proud of his design he calls his mother and shouts: “daddy love”, “daddy love”. Looking at the symbol, she embraced the child and went back to her house chores but shortly after, Mauricio comes back radiant while repeating in a child’s vocabulary: “love of daddy, it’s you.” Teresa cannot hide her tears as she relates the story to her husband. Their hearts have been illumined by the Word: *We have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love...* (1 Jn 4:16).

Truly, God, I often see You when I look beyond the appearances. My niece, Jacinthe, and her husband Daniel could not find a better invitation card to their wedding than the one they chose with a huge “YES”. To me, it came across as the YES of Your Covenant with Your people and Your Covenant with me.

I can also say that Your Presence is visible on the street and in buses. You are there in the mother full of tender loving care for her child. Through her I capture the tender loving care You have for me and all human beings; each one is important and Your love is for everyone. *Can a mother forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!* (Is 49:15).

I saw you, Lord, at Sunday Mass when a father sat his little girl on the bench. Though attentive to what was being said during the Eucharist, he placed his sturdy affectionate hand at a distance in front of his child to protect her from falling yet leaving her enough room to wiggle around. What a beautiful symbol of Your relationship with each person! You are there, attentive, loving, without any kind of pressure or restraints, yet ready to intervene, console, rescue if we come to You for help.

When I go visit the Christian communities in remote villages, women and children come meet me with their produce; they always bring abundantly the best of what they have as a sign of welcome. These women remind me of You, the God of abundance, the Providential God. You are the Lord who always gives the best at the right moment.

THANK YOU, dear God, for the grace of perceiving You in people and events. Yes, You are truly visible everywhere and in all things. And one day, *I will see you face to face* (Job 19:26). I am sure!

And you, have you seen God? Do you want to see Him? *Then, be totally in the present. Drop every thought of the future, drop every thought of the past, drop every image and abstraction, and come into the present. Contemplation will arise!*¹ ∞

¹ De MELLO, Anthony,
The Song of the Bird,
PDF, p. 6

PHOTOS:

¹ IER Students

^{2,3} Sr. Anita with villagers

Credit: Nancy Paz, M.I.C.

Good News From Mati



Humble beginnings can be compared to the tiny mustard seed which needs darkness, isolation and soil of the earth in order to germinate. It often goes unnoticed until it becomes a shrub and later a tree. Humble beginnings are as such—there are no drums, no trumpet sounds, nor do they make the headline news. Rather, simple beginnings take root in the stillness of inspired thoughts which gradually unfold silently and take shape in life-giving actions. Here, we are given a glimpse of what was and is now happening in a specific area of the Philippines.

THE UNKNOWN

In 1947, four other MIC Sisters arrived in Manila, but this time they were to travel in another direction. From Manila, which is north, they took a boat to Davao Oriental; from there a modest barge was waiting for them for another 18 hour trip to Mati which is located in the south-eastern part of the Philippines. The newly arrived Sisters had no idea as to what was awaiting them but they were prepared to serve at whatever cost. At the time there were no paved roads, no electricity and no running water. Drinking water came from heaven; when it rained the water was collected and used to quench the thirst. Divine Providence never failed to provide this basic need.

The Sisters' first priority was to learn the local language; as they went about their chores and communicated with people, they quickly mastered the Visayan dialect. Peoples' needs were many but the greatest was medical help; without delay, they organized a space which became a small clinic and within two months after their arrival the Sisters were providing first aid treatments.

WHEN THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY

Another need was expressed by the local people and that was the children's schooling. Parishioners of the area wanted



Claudette Bouchard,
M.I.C.

The Philippines is a country composed of 7,107 islands, not all are inhabited. With over 150 languages and about 100 ethnic groups there is diversity as well as cultural elements unique to each region. It is here, in this colorful country, that the first five Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception arrived in 1921. The pioneers who had travelled 44 days by cargo boat were more than happy to set foot on land. Manila was their destination and from the onset they assumed the administration of the already existing Chinese General Hospital.

Friendly relationships quickly developed with the families of the patients; this was the beginning of the Sisters' social apostolate. With time they set up a variety of services in order to respond to the expressed needs. Over the years, the MIC Community expanded and spread out to other islands always keeping in mind the needs of the local people.

their little ones to receive a Catholic education. Like bees in a beehive, Sisters lost no time in establishing a school for the local children.

A two-storey home belonging to Mrs. Pacencia Lim Vda de Serrano was used as the first schoolhouse. Six months after their arrival, on June 18, 1947 the school received its official name, *Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy* and Msgr. Clovis Thibault, P.M.E. was invited to bless *IHMA*. This was a significant event for the Bishop who, for many years, had been hoping to have Sisters in his widespread diocese.

Like the mustard seed tree where birds come and make nests in its branches, the IHMA seed took root and slowly became a full grown tree. One month after its official opening the school registered fifteen pupils; the first elementary graduation was held on April 19, 1950 with two students receiving their certificates and four years later, five students graduated from High School. Because of determination and good leadership, the Academy's enrollment increased to the point that the original schoolhouse could no longer accommodate all the pupils. What to do? Find another site that would provide space for expansion... and so it was!

FULLY ALIVE @ 65

From year to year students of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy have strived to excel in academics, music, sports, journalism but above all they hold high the spirit of love, faith, and service. Imbued with a sound Catholic education and Christian values, the Academy received, last October, the Sambuokan Award. The Honorable City Mayor of Mati, Michelle N. Rabat cited IHMA for *"the importance of its pioneering effort in promoting good quality education for the youth of Mati which has become a major force in shaping the aspiration of the Matinians. IHMA is a witness and a participant to Mati's march to fulfill its destiny as a city in harmony with the nation and*



*the global community in accord with the Divine Providence."*¹

Yes, Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy is fully alive and it celebrated its sixty five years of existence last August. The Golden Jubilarians of '62, the Silver Jubilarians of '87, other alumni members, administrators, faculty, staff and the 1,718 students all came together to rejoice in Thanksgiving for the many remarkable achievements and talented students who stood for what they believed in and are now a blessing for their families, their brothers and sisters who are perhaps less fortunate, and for their city, their region as well as their nation.

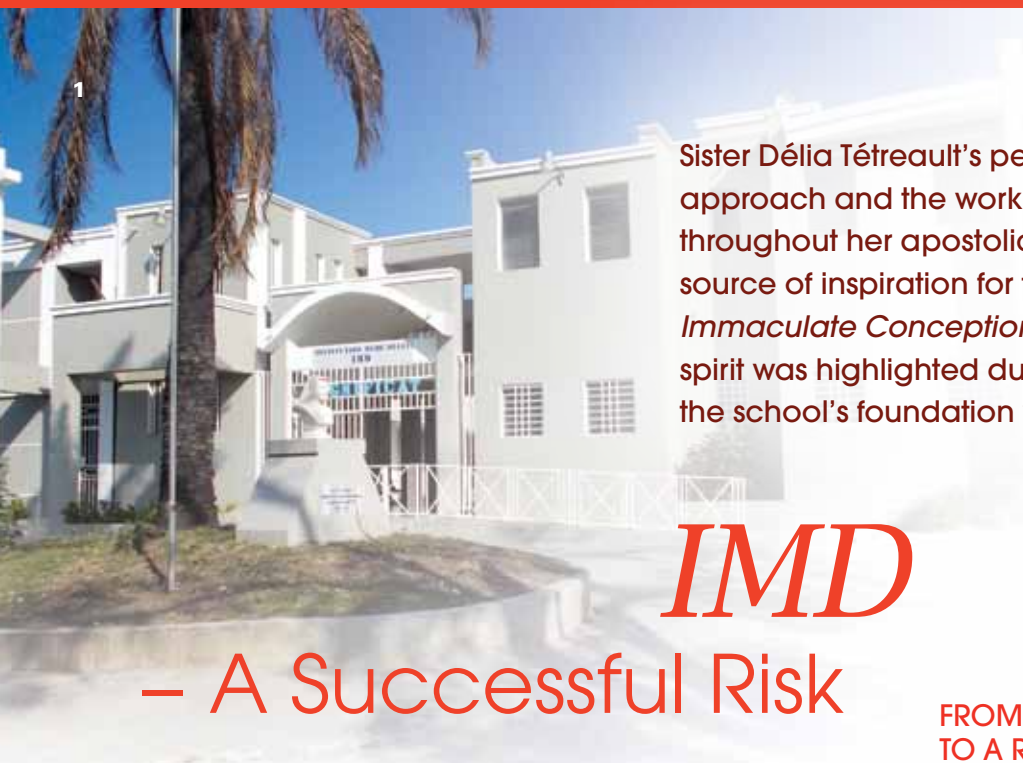
The humble beginnings of IHMA took roots in the stillness of inspired thoughts and throughout the years, life-giving blessings have abounded. Congratulations to all those who have passed-on the flaming ardor of the first four MIC Missionaries and who have maintained the enthusiasm of witnessing the Good News. IHMA'S history tells us that a God-given treasure was given to Mati, may it continue to grow and bloom. 🌸

¹ Baynews – Official Publication of IHMA, June-October 2012

PHOTOS:

¹ IHMA Graduates

² IHMA Field Demonstration
Credit: Alumni.Net



Sister Délia Tétreault's personality, her humanistic approach and the work which she accomplished throughout her apostolic life is still, to this day, a source of inspiration for the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*. Such a dynamic creative spirit was highlighted during the tenth anniversary of the school's foundation which bears her name.

IMD

– A Successful Risk

¹ Cyprien L. Gary, Journalist,
Le Nouvelliste,

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

² Article written in

Le Nouvelliste, 2013-02-05

By Cyprien L. Gary¹

The Institution Mother Délia (IMD) is an educational institution built on a picturesque mount. It is located at No. 7 Renoncule Street, Port-au-Prince, Haiti along the route to the airport. This school which bears the name of the MICs' Foundress, Délia Tétreault, opened its doors during the 2002-2003 academic year. To highlight its tenth anniversary, a religious and cultural ceremony took place on February 4, 2013. The flower-decked school grounds were tidy and exquisitely attractive. Under a tent set up for the occasion, teachers, school personnel, students, parents and guests came together to attend the Mass which was celebrated by Msgr. Quesnel Alphonse, s.m.m. Four priests concelebrated with him, namely: Reverend William Smarth, Erick Jasmin, Vital Médé and Paulin Innocent. Like many others who saw the school site for the first time, the Prelate was overwhelmingly surprised to see this charming building standing strong in an oasis of peace above the tumultuous capital city below. According to him, *the exquisite beauty and well-kept grounds of the school area are indicators that someone is a chief master in maintaining such order*. Without hesitation, the audience agreed and applauded.

FROM A VIRTUAL CONCEPT TO A REALITY

The Eucharistic celebration was enlivened with songs and dance performed by the students; an homage of gratitude was presented to all who contributed to the IMD project. Contemplating the structure of the school and its grounds, no one could imagine that this architectural beauty is the fruit of some fanciful thinking. Sr. Eva Daguilh brought us back in time; she recalled that after much reflection the MIC Sisters of the Haitian Province decided to emphasize the importance of education for young girls by taking a more active role in that particular field. A question came up: why not have a secondary school for girls? Such an idea was not welcomed by all the members of the Congregation. However, while taking a course in business management, two Sisters had the opportunity of presenting a small project that had to be self-financing. With the help of their teachers and experts' supervision they captured this ideal time to scientifically materialize the dream which the majority of the MIC Sisters wanted to see come true. They decided to sell people shares at 50 gourdes (\$10) each; 60% of the shares would go to the MIC Community. The teachers saw the project as a viable one and approved it. Acknowledged scientifically, the Sisters encouraged others to believe in this project and the idea was finally accepted by the authorities of the Congregation.



FINANCING A PROJECT

How to find the necessary funds to build such a school? The initiators opted for non refundable contributions. An appeal was made to parents, MIC Associates, benefactors, friends of the Community, contractors of the Delmas area, organizations such as FOKAL (*Foundation for Knowledge and Liberty*), the Apostolic Nunciature, the Canadian and Japanese embassies, all of these groups accepted to subsidize the project. Encouraged by such generosity, the MIC Sisters from other provinces also invested their meager resources. When came time to buy construction materials, school furniture and supplies, local businesses sold at discount prices. Also worth mentioning are the two hundred parents who entrusted their daughters to this young Institution whose only guarantee was that a religious Congregation was running the school. Competent professionals in the field of education vowed to accompany the students throughout their schooling that they may become responsible citizens, fully aware of their potentials—a strength needed to achieve their goals. However, all of this hard work was almost reduced to shambles with the 2010 earthquake. At this point, two Canadian organizations intervened: (CECI) *Centre for International Studies and Cooperation* along with *Development and Peace*. With their aid, the virtual dream was able to continue its mission. For the past ten years the Institution Mother Délia has become a sound educational facility. Apart from the academics, young girls learn

about democracy, love of one's country and culture, the importance of protecting the environment and social involvement.

A FEAST WITH A CULTURAL, HISTORICAL TOUCH

During the cultural ceremony which followed the religious celebration, the students' performances in dance, music and theater were astounding. Against a background of Haitian Folklore dances, a historical play was acted out recalling the pre-Columbian era, the arrival of slaves in 1492 up to the slave revolt in 1804 which culminated in the elimination of slavery and the founding of the Haitian republic. Charmed by such a presentation, the audience kept asking for more as the applause resounded on the campus.

Students attending the Institute of Mother Délia not only perform well in the arts but are also academically strong. Sister Marie Nadia Noël, school directress, stated that these last five years, each graduation class has had a 100% success rating at the State examinations. But this does not mean that the school goal has been reached; according to Sister, more needs to be done in order to expand the initial project, namely: increase the school faculty, acquire a brass band, offer remedial courses for adults as well as establish a vocational school. There is still much work to be done and plans are still in the making. 🌸

PHOTOS:

¹ IMD, main entrance

² IMD students

³ Folklore dance

Credit: MIC



Dawn Of A New Life



Gislaine-Rita Séguin, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte-Ghislaine) 1931-2013
Les Cèdres, Quebec

Gislaine came from a large family and she took upon herself chores that helped mold her character. Dynamic, determined, generous were qualities she exhibited throughout her life. At the age of twenty she entered our novitiate and began her missionary journey; she worked in Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru. Sr. Gislaine had an innate gift—that of teaching; she was an excellent pedagogue and excelled in catechesis. Upon her return to Canada she taught French to the immigrants. The newly arrived were her chosen ones and they quickly mastered their new language with joy and pride. Sr. Gislaine passed away on New Year's day—an invitation from God to come celebrate her Diamond Jubilee with Him.



Pauline Roy, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Simon) 1928-2013
Saint-Odilon, Quebec

Born in May, the beautiful month of Mary, Pauline had a special devotion to our Lady and she found refuge in her spiritual Mother. At the age of sixteen her dream came true; she entered the MIC novitiate. Some years later, Africa was her destination; in Zambia Sr. Pauline dedicated herself to teaching and promoting the status of women. *Educating a woman is educating a nation.* Wives of catechists attended her classes; practical teaching included sewing, cooking, nutrition and home care. She also reached out to women in remote villages, listening to their needs and responding accordingly. For years, Sr. Pauline sang Mary's Magnificat and without doubt she continues singing with Mary eternally.



Claire Gauvin, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Ludger) 1918-2013
Saint-Stanislas de Champlain,
Quebec

The ninety-four years of Sr. Claire speak eloquently of the art of living harmoniously. She revealed harmony in all she did as a teacher, school principal and musician. Whether she played the organ, the guitar or the accordion she would fill the air with beauty. Around Sr. Claire, everything became a colorful celebration and this even with the poor she loved. During her thirty-five years in Haiti, Sister's many talents were most beneficial. With joy Claire entered the Community at eighteen and on January the third, we saw a beaming Sr. Claire joyfully finding her place at the Eternal banquet. Acknowledging that everything in her life was "Gift of God's Love" she now sings her eternal gratitude.

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

— Délia Tétreault



Lucille Brouillette, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint-Jean-Chrysostome)
1916-2013
Richmond, Quebec

The only girl among seven boys, Lucille was her mother's "blue diamond". Though she loved and admired her, she nevertheless allowed her only daughter to enter our novitiate at the age of twenty-one.

With a Masters Degree in music, Sr. Lucille excelled as choir director and teacher. In 1956, she left for Cuba; with dismay, she had to come back five years later on account of the country's Revolution. After having worked in Peru for a few years, Sister returned to Cuba and lived in solidarity with the people, a trial of strength in utter destitution. Nonetheless, our "blue diamond" tucked in God's Will never lost hope; she radiated joy, serenity, zeal and faith. Peacefully, Sister Lucille received the eternal reward of a dedicated life.



Bérengère Cadieux, M.I.C.
(Sr. Joseph-du-Sauveur)
1917-2013
Montreal, Quebec

The French Canadian singer and composer, Félix Leclerc, once sang: *There will be no place in paradise for patent leather shoes.* Sr. Bérengère, one of the pioneers who opened the first MIC mission in Malawi in 1948, certainly passed the test with high distinction. She never wasted one minute; after teaching all day, she would walk long distances in the African bush to visit families. In 1962, she saw the fruit of her labor; the first secondary boarding school for girls was built in Malawi. Sister lived forty-five years in this beloved country. In 1995 Quebec welcomed her back home. Her shoes being worn out, the Lord called her, this year, to her eternal rest.

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A Tribute to The Association of Louis Tétreau's Descendants

Next October, in the City of Trois-Rivières, Quebec, there will be a great gathering of all the Tétreau descendants. They will celebrate the 350th Wedding Anniversary of their ancestors, Louis Tétreau and Noëlle Landeau.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception take part in the joy and thanksgiving of all those who will participate at this special event. The descendants of Alexis Tétreault (1830-1904) of Marieville, Quebec, father of Venerable Délia Tétreault, Foundress of the MJC Institute are invited to send their names and addresses to the office of the Cause of Délia Tétreault:

100 Place Juge Desnoyers, Laval, QC H7G 1A4 • causedeliatetreault@gmail.com • Telephone : 450-663-6460, ext. 5402

Astonished and Amazed

*Like tulips long lying hidden
suddenly springing forth
making beauty out of sunlight*

*like soil caught and turned,
warm, moist, and ready for seed,
opening its heart for growing*

*like spring speaking to the day
about the goodness of the earth,
patterning green on every plain*

*like trickles of raindrops
smoothing earth's rough edges,
healing hardened hillsides*

*like all these quiet miracles
so is the coming of Spirit,
telling of the surge of life*

*urging me to gaze again
upon my very common days,
to look within and be amazed.*

Joyce Rupp

(Out of the Ordinary, Ave Maria Press -2000)

