

MIC

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MISSION NEWS



To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923

CANADA

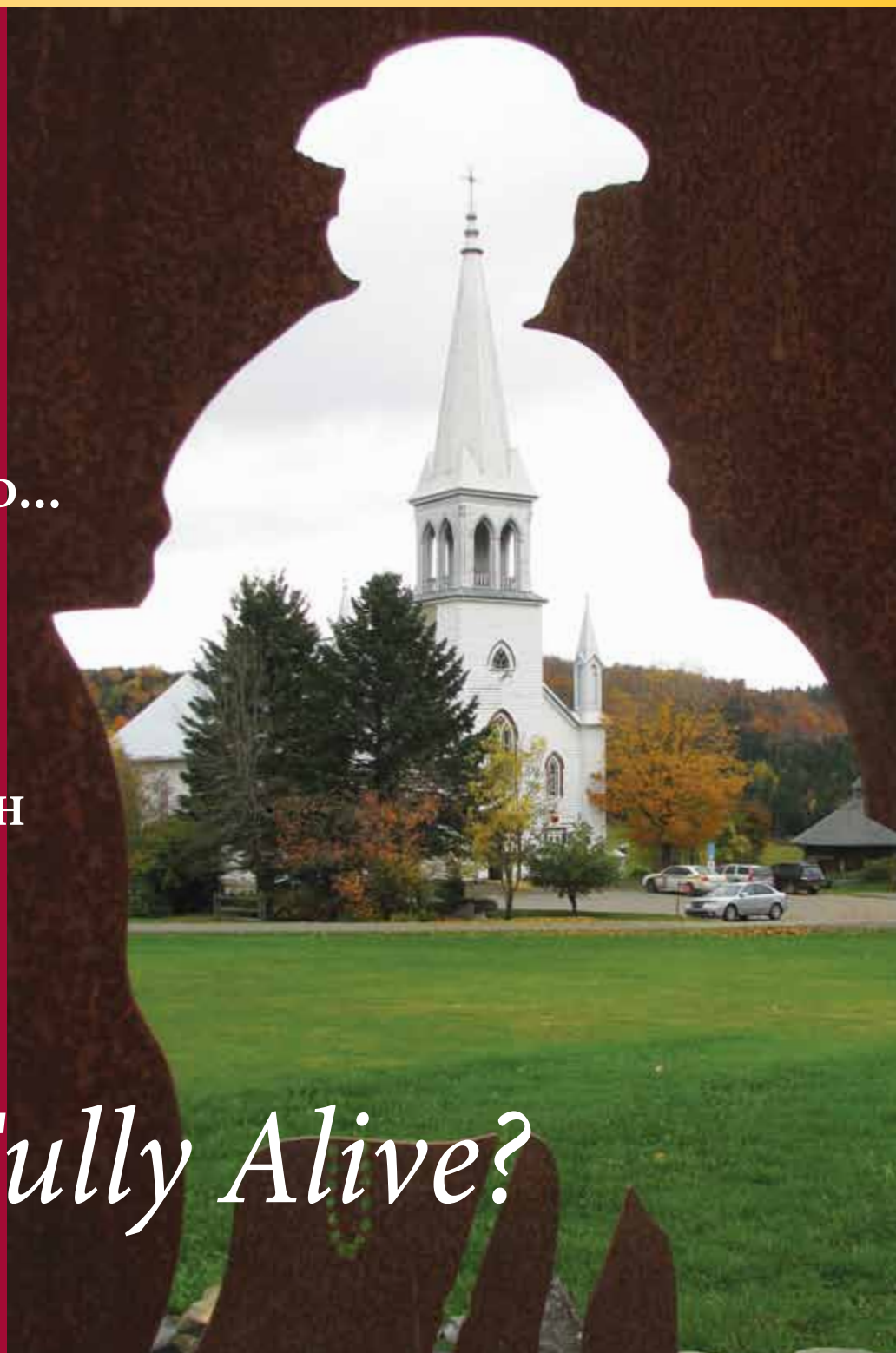
ALL ROADS LEAD...
FURTHER!

ASIA

LIVING MY FAITH
WITH MARY

IN FOCUS

Life — Fully Alive?



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2013

OCTOBER

WORLD MISSION DAY

We pray that this celebration may help all Christians realize that we are not only receivers but proclaimers of God's Word.

NOVEMBER

LATIN AMERICAN CHURCHES

We pray for the Latin American Churches, that they may send missionaries to other Churches throughout the world.

DECEMBER

PREPARE THE SAVIOR'S COMING

We pray that all Christians, enlightened by the Word incarnate, may prepare humanity for the Savior's coming.

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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EDITORIAL

Life — An Infinite Value



During vacation time I had the opportunity of visiting St-Venant-de-Paquette, a small village of 100 inhabitants in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. It is a marvelous and quaint place thanks to the Quebec songwriter and singer Richard Séguin and his colleagues who created the Poetry Walk. It is here that many of our own historic artists have been revived. A woman's silhouette carved in a metal sheet (ref: cover page) offers us a striking view of the life in the village. Life, truly alive? Yes! This symbolic opening led me to reflect on the subject.

These days we speak about dying with dignity. I thought to myself—life has an infinite value. Life is a gift; it is lent to us to spread love, to give and expect nothing in return. We are more than a simple cosmic result, more than a product which has come forth by chance or accident. Our life has a goal and meaning because it takes its origin in God who loves us. What sense would our life have if it ended in emptiness? Life has an infinite value and each one contributes to something that is irreplaceable. Is it not everybody's dream to leave behind a trace or a souvenir of our passage here on earth? Who remembers that woman of St-Venant-de-Paquette? Nonetheless, she is simply there while life continues circulating through her and around her.

When we think of the late Pope John-Paul II, of Nelson Mandela and many others... their preference was to wait for God's time. It is a question of Faith. Our Christian Faith reminds us that life has an infinite value in God; it belongs to God and returns to God. Isaac Newton, the most influential scientist of all time and key figure in the scientific revolution once said, *"He who thinks half-heartedly will not believe in God; but he who really thinks has to believe in God."*

The articles presented in this issue offer you an opportunity to ponder upon the value of life. Authors, Manon and Isabelle have struggled with many difficulties yet they remained strong, the inner purpose of their lives emerged. Sister Monique's missionary life of sixty years in Japan was a total gift to others; those dedicated years have left indelible traces in God's heart. Before taking any serious decisions, would it not be worthwhile to ponder upon the inner purpose of life?

May this issue be for you enjoyable, interesting and fruitful.

Marie-Paule Sanguin, m.i.c.

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

Mother Délia appreciated the gift of life. From such an appreciation came her wishes for long life and her many good advices, inviting her Sisters to be prudent concerning their health, their well-being.

HER PIECES OF ADVICE:

Cultivate holy joy as it is a great factor in keeping healthy. There must be sunshine in life...

(July 25, 1931).

I enjoin you to take care of your health as you would take care of mine. What would become of our dear mission if you would disappear? The human machine cannot be replaced as would a sewing machine.

(April 11, 1910)

Be prudent. When we are young, we do not appreciate our health enough. Yet, it is a blessing of the present life.

(November 5, 1915)

Rest, good nutrition, a peaceful and happy life will greatly contribute to her recovery.

(March 9, 1932)

I fear that you are undertaking tasks that are beyond your strength... If you burn the candle at both ends, your work will remain uncompleted... I advise you, my Daughter, do not overtax yourself.

(May 7, 1933)

HER WISHES:

As for you, dear little One, I wish that your life be a life of peace, of joy, of prayer, of constant union with Our Lord.

(October 18, 1917)

My wish for you, dear Children, is that you be granted long life and an excellent health so as to be able to work ceaselessly and for many years, dedicated to the service of the Lord.

(September 26, 1926)

**FOR ALL FAVORS
RECEIVED-OR-DESIRED**

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Help Someone Become **SOMEONE**

When a child is born, the entire world should become and remain responsible for this little person. However, increasingly children are troubled and scarred. Is LIFE truly alive?



By André Gadbois

I was always wild for bulletin boards and visuals, so much so that for almost forty years we have had a huge one in our home. It was made and given to us by friends and ever since has been hanging on the wall of our enclosed porch. It is round like the Earth, yellow like the Sun. Almost every day it illustrates *life* with its joys, its anxieties, its victories, its sorrows; *life* around us and on our planet. It is a seasonal bulletin board, indicating current events so as to keep *life* alive. Dust has no time to accumulate! It is a circular heart that keeps beating, it is a conversation piece where visitors stop and read; questions arise, opinions are expressed. Our bulletin board is an instrument meant for sharing, for communion, for thanksgiving as it keeps before our eyes all the events that are happening around the Globe. Like bread that nourishes the body, it nourishes our soul. It shows us the eyes of our universal brothers and sisters which are often sad, tearful and fearful.

Time and again, society's speech is deceitful but our bulletin board tries to counteract that aspect because essentially to live *life* fully does not mean to acquire a load of information or knowledge as so many gurus affirm but rather to develop true relationships. To live *life* fully does not mean getting ahead by all means, or by stepping on someone's reputation so as to gain popularity or power. Living *life* to its fullest does not consist in superficially multiplying relationships but rather reach-

ing out, touching a heart to help someone become **SOMEONE**. Such a relationship, away from the public eye, allows a human being to be uplifted, recognized and appreciated; the person gets to know one's self as worthy and noble. But today, the ideologies and powers sacrifice, without any regrets, millions of human lives and too many people aware of the situation keep silence for the sake of preserving their own treasury. The truth is not in what we consider "a success" but rather the truth is found in the nobleness of each human being. With every child that is born comes a world-wide responsibility; every human being is to be recognized as noble, respected and supported throughout its lifetime. And so it was meant to be with the birth and life of Christ. However, at the age of thirty-three, all the ideologies and powers of His time as well as those who kept silence chose their own interests and sacrificed the One who was born in Bethlehem of Judea. And the massacre continues...

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF YOU

However, there is no other road than the one of the Prophet of Nazareth: *Love one another as I have loved you* (Jn 15:12). Jesus illustrated this well in His parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). He also showed us the Way when, on that Thursday night before the crucifixion, Jesus washed the feet of His Apostles and said: *I have given you an example that you*

should do as I have done for you (Jn 13:15). The years prior to this event, Jesus walked the roads and spent His time (the cynical would say that He lost His time) healing people, helping them to rise above their misery, consoling them from their sorrows. He nourished them, reconciled them, and helped them become **SOMEONE**; those individuals who were thought useless, worthless, suddenly recognized their own worthiness. Though very conscious of the dangers He encountered, Jesus did not stop denouncing a system that classified persons as good or bad, a system that boxed-in people as lower class or higher class, or of condemning a so-called powerful master who kept people in servitude. I can almost hear Jesus say to the downtrodden of our days, *"You are the strength of your life, stand firm!"* Or perhaps, *"You are worth more than you think, raise your eyes and look ahead!"* Another invitation, *"Come, give me your hand, I am not ashamed of you."* Many of us can express these words of encouragement as we go about healing the hurts of life and help individuals recognize their worth.

From the very moment of His birth, the Child was surely pampered by Mary and Joseph and perhaps even by the neighbors around the grotto and by the generous shepherds who came to pay their

respects. It is logic that the evangelists are silent about such information because they were far from it all. One sure thing, Jesus grew in wisdom and grace within a peaceful and responsible family where there was no physical or mental disadvantage. His living environment was a healthy one; the human relationships were filled with confidence and faith in the future. Nowadays, on all the continents, human relations are fragile, ready to break and this produces infernal situations: wars, famines, unemployment, sickness, ecological negligence, economic dictatorship and corruption. All these disasters shatter so many parents and consequently their children; we can imagine the number of little ones who will always simply be 'someone' because they never had the chance to discover their nobleness as **SOMEONE**. Life—truly alive? Yet, the Child born more than two thousand years ago came to bring us fullness of Life. As an adult He said, *"I have come that they may have Life and have it to the full."* (Jn 10:10) As disciples of this Jesus who died and resurrected, we have much to do: nourished by Him and of Him, we are meant to nourish others of His life as He has told us to do and to help the downtrodden around us find their nobleness and their worth. It starts where we are. 

PHOTOS:

¹ Montreal International
Mosaicultures 2013

² Fostering trust and growth

Photos Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



Fostering trust and growth²



A Walk for Life

The 'Quebec Rally against Euthanasia' announced a large-scale 'WALK' against the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide. The event took place on May 18 and rallied people from all backgrounds. Though the author of this article did not have the occasion of participating, her testimony is a long walk for life.



By Josée Bailly

PASSIONATE FOR LIFE

When I was a child, I loved Christmas. I still love Christmas: the birth of Jesus, the joy that comes with the event, celebrating Life and its meaning. On the other hand, I did not like Easter. Jesus was killed on Good Friday, but in my youthful imagination it was on Easter and that meant suffering and death. How then could I love Easter?

I could not endure suffering or death. Pain brought distress. I was taught to reject it and to fight it. When I suffered from a small ache, my grandmother would apply some medicated potion and if I were not feeling better after three days, she would consider me as being lazy. My grandmother, a Catholic and widowed, was a well-built woman who worked all her life in the rice and cocoa fields to earn her family's livelihood. She rarely went to the doctor. But now, at the age of ninety and suffering from all kinds of ailments, she realizes that it is not always possible to feel better after three days.

Death scared me. My grandmother's tales and the Ivory Coast culture where I was raised only reinforced that fear. Sorcerers, the magical creatures who venerated death, the evil spirit who searched the soul of the living, the spooky cemeteries where no one dared visit, terrified the little girl that I was back then.

Death was the end of life. From the age of eight, I grew up in France, a secular country of Cartesian logic. Death was the end, the absolute emptiness, an emptiness that attracted me when, as an adolescent, I perceived only suffering on earth. Why live? Why make an effort? Why suffer if in the end there is only an absolute emptiness?

LIFE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

But then, while I was preparing to receive Baptism, a Nun told me, "*Josée, Easter is LIFE, it is the Resurrection! When we die, we go to God! Death is only a passage, it is not the end.*" Finally, everything made sense!

This holy revelation made me understand life in another way and I captured how precious life is. I felt deep love for God, for my neighbor and for all God's children.

I still have difficulty enduring pain. My heart still aches when I suffer, or when I see others suffering and dying. However, now I know that pain heralds deep inner reflection, that death heralds Resurrection, just like winter heralds spring. And when I come across someone who suffers, I like to be a refreshing spring presence by their side.

Autumn is my favorite season because of the colors, the rain and the temperate climate. Though I know the colors will gradually disappear, the trees will become bare, winter will take over, and rain will become ice, though I know the winds will blow mercilessly, that snow storms will oblige me to remain indoors, I also am well aware that those trees will bloom again, and the seasons will keep rotating until I am once again with my favorite time of the year—Autumn.

Created for Life

God is Life. He created all human beings for life. Though I can be deprived of my physical and intellectual capacities, I do not seek death. Though illness takes a toll on human life, God will carry me through with His Loving Grace. If pain leads me to death, God will give me New Life which will be eternal.

Some people have romantically portrayed suffering and death while others have made suffering and death something to run away from and absolutely reject. As we have feared death likewise we have glorified death. We have made death more desirable than life. The right to die with dignity has become an ultimate choice for some persons. Many take their own lives; others take a deliberate action with the intention of ending someone's life to relieve intractable suffering, thinking this is an ultimate act of love and heroism.

Some say that suffering and death exist because such is God's Will. Some people deliberately make others suffer, while others inflict suffering upon themselves; some kill others while taking their own lives believing they give glory to God. But look at Jesus—has He not healed the sick, treated the ill, nourished crowds, prevented death, struggled against suffering and death, and wept after speaking with Lazarus' grieving sisters? By His resurrection Jesus wanted to help us understand that we are not meant to be imprisoned by death; He shattered the power of death and freed us from its sting.

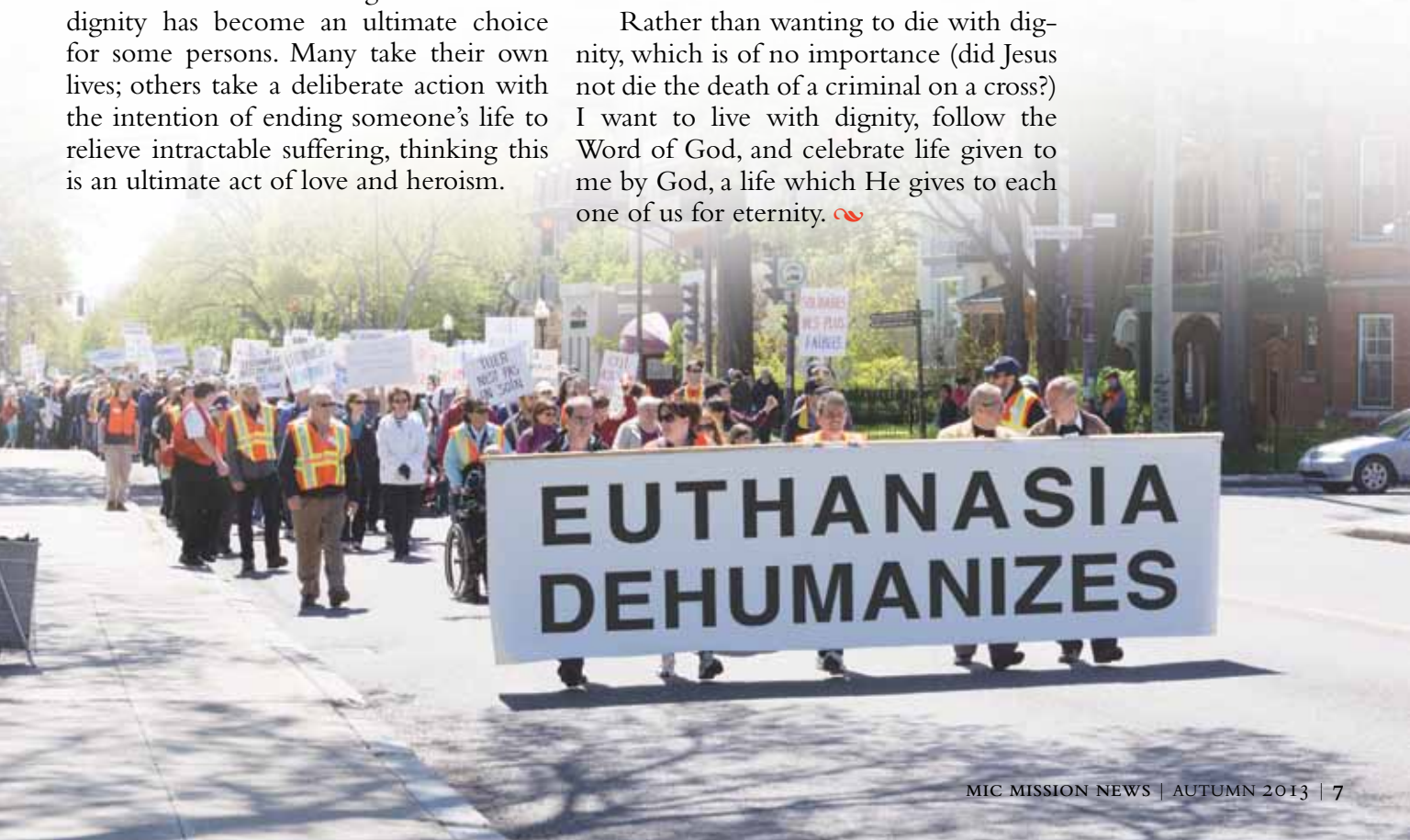
Jesus leads me to eternal Life. If I must not fear death nor apply aggressive therapy to the terminally ill, equally I must not glorify or seek death.

Life is precious, I want to celebrate it. I want to live, to rejoice, to love like Jesus loved. I want to assist those who suffer—to be the legs, arms, ears of those who cannot walk, who cannot hear, cannot reach out. I want to be a messenger of hope to those who are called to return to the Father; I want to help them go to the Father in peace and confidence, radiating Life as a child of God.

Rather than wanting to die with dignity, which is of no importance (did Jesus not die the death of a criminal on a cross?) I want to live with dignity, follow the Word of God, and celebrate life given to me by God, a life which He gives to each one of us for eternity. 

PHOTOS:

Springtime WALK Against
Euthanasia – Quebec 2013
Photos Credit: Luc Dallaire





ALL ROADS LEAD... *FURTHER!*



By Émilien Roscanu

PHOTOS:

Sébastien and Philippe now have important choices before them.

Photos Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

To be fully alive and reap the maximum benefits of life we must be able to follow our own way. From our very first cry up to adolescence, our steps are guided, at first by our parents, then by those who establish the foundations of our education. As adults, many important choices are before us and many of those are linked to studies or a career. At times, the choices are a cause of stress or of anguish. What will I do later in life? What will I accomplish? Such questions come to our mind because we know that these decisive choices will have an impact on our future. To be anxious while looking at all the alternatives is understandable.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

For many, a first phase to overcome and live fully is that of a higher education. Those of us who wish to take up the challenge must know what is waiting for us. Courses all day long, evenings spent in studying, week-ends working part-time: collegiate or university students are always stimulated and occupied. However, this constant buoyancy in the life of a young adult is most beneficial. Being involved in various projects, experimenting and observing different ways of doing things enriches the student, but all those activities (projects, studies, work) can be sources of stress.

To succeed that important phase in our lives, we have to ask ourselves one

crucial question: what is our goal? To have a goal is the first step towards success. Students who always question themselves and doubt the necessity of such a long process will have difficulty succeeding something as important and as laborious as higher studies. Therefore, the first step is to fix an objective which can be achieved within a short, medium and long term. At the end of each cycle, they can evaluate and shift through all the questions that have come up. Thus, when challenged during their post-secondary studies, the students can recall the goal for which they began this great adventure and it will help them to persevere. When we are not very passionate about a course or that the work demands more efforts than we had anticipated, then we can think that this is only a temporary situation towards the set objective.

FOLLOW YOUR OWN WAY

To set a goal is very important, but to find the means by which we will reach that goal is just as crucial. All roads are good, as long as they correspond to the person we are. We must be true to ourselves; we must assume our choices and their consequences. Some will walk the conventional path throughout their years of studies and this is good as long as the student feels comfortable with it.

Others will go about it differently and this is the case of someone who is dear to

me. This young adult recently decided to leave his studies behind and tour North America via autostop—hitchhiking, car pooling, etc. For a period of time, he will learn from the “school of life.” Certainly, this choice can be questioned but for the moment we cannot judge the results. This young man’s life is before him, his own to shape. If he has decided to use a less orthodox method, yet manages to live a successful life filled with happiness then we will have no other alternative than to share his joy and be proud of him. Choosing the unusual road can lead to a life of fulfillment just as well as can treading the traditional well-planned path.

One very extraordinary person who ventured off the beaten track and amazingly succeeded in his life is Jamie Hyneman. He is an American special-effects expert and co-host of the television series *MythBuster*. At the age of fourteen Jamie left home and hitchhiked all over the United States. Since then, he has earned a degree in Russian linguistics from Indiana University; he also received an honorary Doctor of Engineering degree from Villanova University. He is one of the designers of the aerial robotic camera system. Besides these talents, he

is a certified dive master, wilderness survival expert, boat captain, animal wrangler, machinist, concrete inspector and chef in a restaurant. *“Every man must invent its way,”* said Sartre. This citation holds true especially when we read about the successful stories of those who risked taking the unknown path.

... being true to one’s self and avoid the “appearance” game, are key elements to success. ~

FOLLOW YOUR DREAM

To live a fulfilled life we must not only set a goal for ourselves but must equally have means to reach it. Also, to persevere in our undertakings, being true to ourself and avoid the ‘appearance’ game, are key elements to success. Assuming our choices and their consequences, following our personal path and remaining authentic are ways of living life to its fullest. Each moment of our life on earth will be worth living when life will truly be... alive! ~

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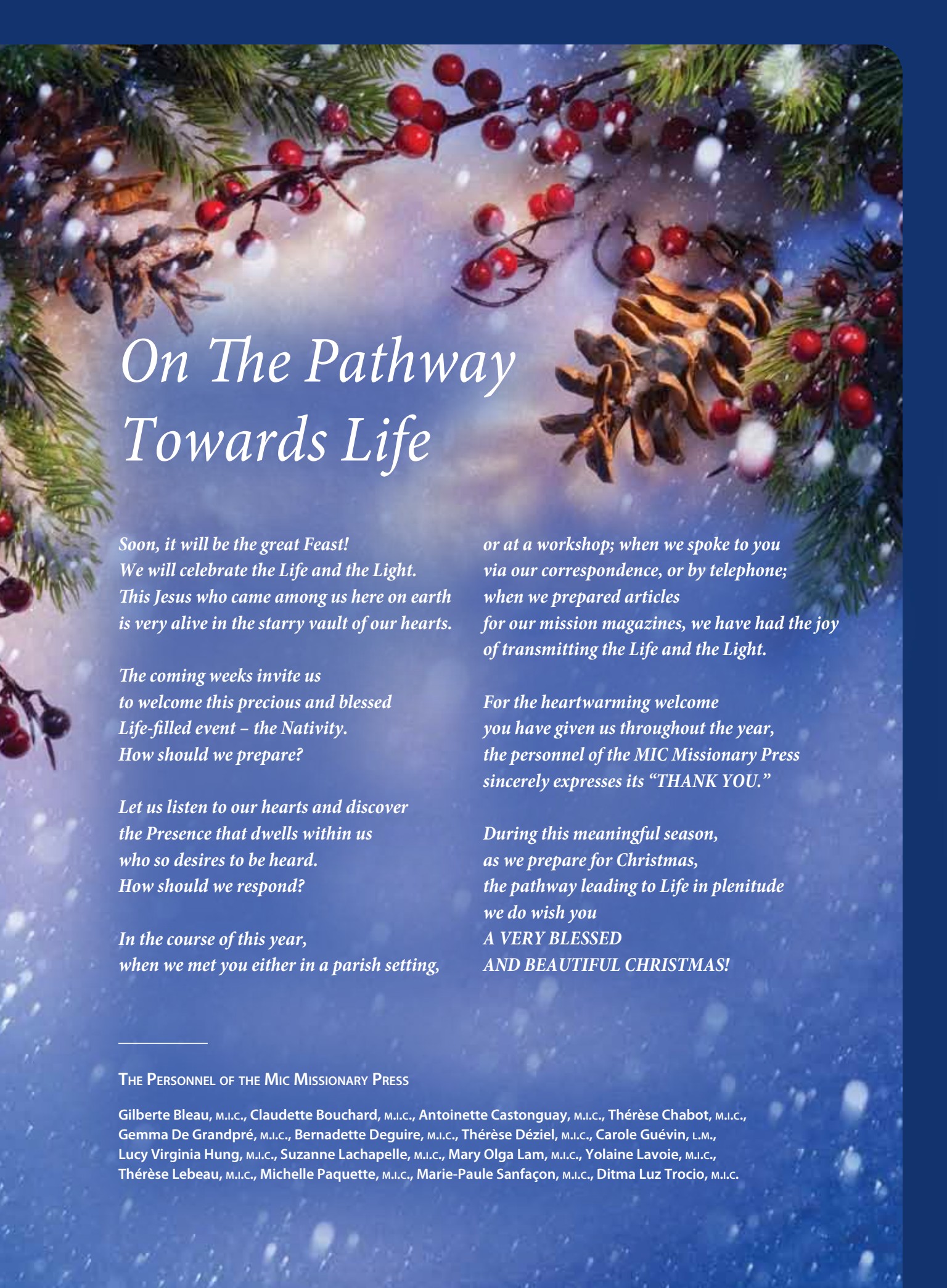
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On The Pathway Towards Life

*Soon, it will be the great Feast!
We will celebrate the Life and the Light.
This Jesus who came among us here on earth
is very alive in the starry vault of our hearts.*

*The coming weeks invite us
to welcome this precious and blessed
Life-filled event – the Nativity.
How should we prepare?*

*Let us listen to our hearts and discover
the Presence that dwells within us
who so desires to be heard.
How should we respond?*

*In the course of this year,
when we met you either in a parish setting,*

*or at a workshop; when we spoke to you
via our correspondence, or by telephone;
when we prepared articles
for our mission magazines, we have had the joy
of transmitting the Life and the Light.*

*For the heartwarming welcome
you have given us throughout the year,
the personnel of the MIC Missionary Press
sincerely expresses its “THANK YOU.”*

*During this meaningful season,
as we prepare for Christmas,
the pathway leading to Life in plenitude
we do wish you*

*A VERY BLESSED
AND BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS!*

THE PERSONNEL OF THE MIC MISSIONARY PRESS

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IN FOCUS

Life — Fully Alive?

THE DANCE OF LIFE

Lord, to be a good dancer with You, one must follow, be lively, be light and above all, not be inflexible. One must not ask explanations about the steps You like to make. One must know when to stop and when to glide instead of stepping.

Lord, come and invite us. We are ready to Dance for You, the dance of work; the one of heat and later, the one of cold. If some tunes are often minor, we will not tell You that they are sad. If people jostle us, we will take it with a smile, knowing well that often happens when we dance.

Lord, teach us what place has the singular dance of our obedience in this eternal romance started between You and us. Reveal to us the great orchestra of Your designs

where You allow the sound of strange notes within the serenity that You want. Each day, teach us to don our human condition like a prom dress which will make us love You in every detail as necessary jewelry.

Help us to live our lives not like a chess game in which everything is calculated, nor like a match in which everything is difficult, nor as a theorem that challenges our mind, but like an unending feast where our meeting with You is constantly new. Let it be like a ball, like a dance, in the Arms of Your Grace, within the universal music of Love.

Lord, come and invite us.

DELBREL, Madeleine, (2000) *We, the Ordinary People of the Streets*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
(Excerpt taken from *The Dance of Obedience*)





A LIFELONG COMMITMENT

Returning to one's homeland after 60 years abroad is quite a feat; readapting to all the changes surely demands openness and acceptance. Sr. Monique Cloutier, M.I.C. whose heart beats to the Japanese culture is currently going through this phase; she shares with us her mission experience.



By Huguette Turcotte,
M.I.C.

HT: *Sr. Monique, welcome to Pont-Viau, a place well-known to both of us as this is where we first met so many years ago. We were novices back then and now I wonder how different you might be after having lived most of your life in Asia. Would you tell us the important points of your long mission commitment?*

MC: Thank you for your warm welcome; this convent brings back memories as this is where I entered on August 8, 1944. It is in Japan that my entire missionary life unfolded except for the three years when I went to the Philippines; I was asked to collaborate with the formation team in the training of the young MIC Sisters. All those sixty years have gone by very quickly and I am still the same person because I have remained young at heart. I come back to my homeland after having accomplished the dream of my youth, that is: *Tell the Good News to those who do not know it.*

HT: *In 1951 you left for Japan on a cargo ship. I suppose that when you arrived the language and the Japanese culture were quite a challenge?*

MC: Yes, of course, but I immediately loved that country and its people. When we are strongly motivated, studying the language is a cinch. The grammar is rather easy, but the characters are more difficult to learn. However, after three years in Tokyo, I began teaching English and give religious courses at Wakamatsu where we have a school of a few hundred students mostly non-Christians. I was surprised to learn that the parents of these youngsters paid to send their children to a Catholic school and the reason was because they wanted them to receive a solid education based on moral values. The public schools also offer good quality education and moreover they are free. I was intrigued by those parents who chose a Catholic school for the education of their children.

What was their deep motivation? In our schools faith education is included in the curriculum even though very few of our students are Catholic.

In 1980, the parents became the focus of my attention because I had observed that they did not feel concerned about the religion they wanted their children to learn. We cannot desire what we know nothing of! I therefore prepared sessions entitled: *Mother and Child Relationship*, a method adapted from the Rochais¹ workshops. The aim was to help parents discover their inner richness and the positive PRH approach responded well to that need. The parents had an inner desire to know about the Power of Beauty and of Goodness that dwells within them; the seed already there was simply waiting to grow and develop. Religion does help in discovering those inner strengths.

HT: *I can guess what follows. There are Japanese whose lives took on a new orientation because you have crossed their path?*

MC: Yes, the sessions were successful; they contributed in helping individuals discover their gifts, their deep values and finding answers to their questions, even to go further in their quest of the Good News. A good number of these new Christians have become “associates” of our Institute and continue to improve their initiation under the inspiration of Mother Délia, our Foundress, and to receive spiritual guidance from our MIC Japanese Sisters.

HT: *While in Japan, you’ve experienced both happy and sad events; I think of the years after World War II and of the terrible earthquake in 2011. What can you tell us about those historical events?*

MC: The earthquake is still very vivid in my memory because our schools were located in the devastated zone. In Koriyama, our buildings resisted the jolt but inside there were important damages. We were without communications for two weeks and the people brought us food. I can still recall the man who came to

us with great joy because, after hours of searching, he was able to find a half loaf of bread for us. The population, the teachers and our associates were one with us and demonstrated great solidarity. In the area, reconstruction is still in the building phase; repairs are done where most urgent. What is most tragic up to this day is the dispersion of families. The father remains in the area to support his family while the mother and children leave the area to avoid nuclear radiation.

The Sisters have given psychological help to all those families separated and destitute, especially the children...

HT: *Sr. Monique, when you look back and consider that long road behind you, what do you think of your life?*

MC: If I were to start over again, I would make the same choice because I realized my childhood dream. I would take up the same course with perhaps less illusions and more generosity. I would continue seeking the needs of the human heart and personalize the content of my faith, and why would I want to pursue this search? Simply to discover at a deeper level the hidden inner treasure that is in harmony with the Japanese soul while respecting the culture, for I profoundly love these people. We talked about our values, we shared our cultural heritage, and together we lived so many events—all in all it has been sixty years of *getting to know each other*. Yes, I have become very much Japanese and my heart is with the people; however, my Canadian roots are gradually resurfacing and life will surely continue blossoming right here at home.

HT: *Thank you Sr. Monique for sharing with us a fraction of your life experience in Japan where you have given the very best of yourself out of love for the people. Sixty years of missionary life cannot be summarized in only two pages; therefore, we invite you to write another chapter of your long journey designed by the Lord. We hope it will be another rendezvous with our readers. ∞*

¹ PRH (Personality and Human Relations)

PHOTO:

Sr. Monique in Japan

Photo Credit: MIC

A GOD-GIVEN NAME

By Manon Clérout

We often hear that trials make us grow. If that's the case, I would surely be taller than my five feet. The last fifteen years of my life have been strewn with intensive moments—great joys and trials.

Such moments led me to embark on a spiritual quest: I began reading the Hindu bible and to practice the Buddhist and Hindu meditation until the time Jesus revealed Himself to me. I was transformed by Him, I journeyed with Him, I found myself and discovered my true identity through Him. The following is the testimony of my wonderful spiritual adventure and fascinating discoveries.

JESUS IN MY PSYCHIC

At the end of a few “active imagination” sessions, a person appeared to me as Jesus Christ. Clearly, I recognized Him by His love and compassion. Somehow, I was worried, but the therapist reassured me: *that is quite possible*. The fear gave way to joy because the presence of Jesus was gentle in my heart. I was surprised by these comforting encounters and though I found it strange, I had a desire to become a nun so as to be with Jesus every minute of my life... how could that be? I, a married woman, divorced and mother of a family... Ouf!

UNBELIEVABLE BUT TRUE

One day, on my way back from a consultation in hypnosis, I stopped in a park to have my lunch. I was very relaxed and liberated from certain burdens of the past. As I looked at the sky, I saw myself standing at the foot of a roadside cross. With great intensity I contemplated the Body of Jesus on the cross. I was fascinated by this Presence which seemed to be looking at me though the Eyes were closed... I then became one with Jesus, crucified with Him and in Him. What was happening?

A woman of heart and mind, passionate and dynamic, Manon was a civil engineer for fifteen years. She is currently self-employed as a massage therapist and yoga professor. Manon has experienced a unique way of love though most baffling... but is it not said that God moves in a mysterious way?

I remained there, still, sensitive to this Presence which filled my heart with gentleness. I felt tremendous compassion for this Man who died on the cross. Thereafter, I was imbued with great joy and intense peace, it was a magnificent moment almost magical—it was a moment of grace I was told by the spiritual directors whom I consulted to better understand. For me, it was a call from Jesus Christ to follow Him.

MY LIFE-TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

I had a taste for reading the Bible. Out of curiosity, I decided to go visit the church close-by. I had not been in a church for almost forty years, but now without hesitation, without any effort and with an open heart, I wanted to go. So many surprises: I was thirsty for the Word of God, I hungered to be united to Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, I was happy to find myself with other people singing and praying.

From that moment on, Jesus, who is Life within me, sent me many guiding signs. I was easily directed to take part in a prayer group as well as a Gospel sharing group. Everything happened without any effort, it was really fascinating. But I also had a great desire to serve, to commit myself. The doors opened before me: I began working as a volunteer at the Laval Palliative Care Home. As I tended to the needs of the terminally ill patients, I discovered a vocation that suits me very well.

I kept questioning myself because the thought of becoming a religious kept haunting me. I consulted many people and I finally began a spiritual discernment with a *Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception*.

Thanks to the enriching meetings with Sr. Louisa Nicole and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius which she suggested I follow, I rediscovered Jesus Christ. Now, Jesus' incarnation speaks to me more and has a greater impact than Hinduism

and Buddhism. I recognize myself in Jesus' way of being compassionate toward others and of living according to God's Will. Being attentive to my deepest desires and living life fully are attitudes which correspond with my personality.

MANON OF LOVE

In the course of the spiritual exercises, I took a few weeks to discover my elected spiritual name which would define more precisely what my mission was meant to be. Manon of Love, this name given to me by Jesus fits me perfectly well. One with me, His indwelling Presence guides all my actions. It is now clear, I will not be a religious but a laity imbued of the Holy Trinity. My vocation is to fully live by my new name—*Manon of Love*.

The more I let go and trust God,
the more I feel I am guided. ~

Jesus, the Word incarnate, the Shepherd who gathers His lost sheep came after me; He revealed the Father's Love for me that I may live according to God's Will. The more I let go and trust God, the more I feel I am guided and my life flows with deep inner joy.

I want to share my rediscovered Faith and I hope my actions will bear fruit. Though I feel it is well anchored within me, I must keep nourishing it. Thus, I continue reading and sharing the Word of God with members from the Pèlerin Community in Montreal.

At home, I have a prayer corner where I talk to Jesus. I listen to Him, give Him thanks for all the little miracles in my life. The Eucharist is a privileged moment, a time of intimate union with Jesus Christ; it is here that I find my enthusiasm to help, to serve, to work with joy and communicate love. I am *Manon of Love*. ~

PHOTO:

The author at the foot
of the cross

Photo Credit: C. Guévin



Isabelle, a colleague of Sister Louisa Nicole, M.I.C., animates “Workshops in Self-Management Programs for Chronic Diseases”. She is heavily handicapped as the result of an accident; here she relates the secret of her happy and fulfilling life.

By Isabelle Ducharme

At twenty-two, an automobile accident transformed my life. I do not have the life I had imagined I would have, but I continue living MY LIFE. I refuse to allow my wheelchair or peoples' looks dictate my actions.

I always craved for adventure. I grew up camping with my family in Quebec and in the Maritimes. At fourteen, I took part in a student exchange program; I was welcomed in British Columbia and lived one month with an English speaking family. At seventeen, I registered at *Katimavik*¹ a registered charity which educates Canadian youth through volunteer work. The following summer, I participated in a professional mobility project via the Franco-Quebec Office for Youth. Enriched by so many positive experiences I then applied to become a Royal Canadian Mounted Police. On the eve of my twenty-second birthday, I received

news that I had been selected. What joy! I walked on clouds! Two great events to celebrate: my entrance at the RCMP and my twenty-second birthday.

THE FATAL ACCIDENT

I did not have a chance to be ‘toasted’ for my new job nor even blow out a candle. Ten days after, I woke up from a deep coma in my hospital bed in Winnipeg, Manitoba, surprised to hear the voices of my parents and stepmother. When I opened my eyes, I realized my left arm was in a cast, my right arm had a metal support, and my head was immobilized by a brace. I could not move my legs. According to the doctors, I would never walk again nor be able to eat by myself, let alone live independently in an apartment. Since challenges propel me forward, I was determined to prove them wrong. I said to myself: it could have been worst.

After a month and a half in the hospital, I was transferred to Montreal; two rehabilitation centers received me and I worked relentlessly to regain a certain amount of autonomy. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy were everyday activities. The days when I succeeded to move my arms a bit, I was full of hope; on the other hand, when I reached my limit I felt discouraged. However, with determination I doubled my eagerness and I progressed anew.

THE CHALLENGES

Two and a half years later, notwithstanding the doctors' skepticism, I could partially move my arms; I could eat by myself with the help of a bracelet holding my fork, and furthermore, I was planning to go live alone in an apartment. I was even able to fulfill one of my dreams: attached to my instructor, I was able to experience parachute sky diving. Though I cannot move my hands and feel absolutely nothing from below the shoulders down to my feet, I can move around thanks to my motorized wheelchair.

While I was at the *Lucie Bruneau Rehabilitation Center* I tried to resume my studies in translation. Unfortunately, I had to abandon my dream because I was still too fragile having had no 'break' since my accident. I was exhausted and depressed. For the first time in my life I thought all my dreams would collapse. After having been in a state of lethargy for some time, I went South with a personal care attendant. Upon my return, I was full of energy; I was ready to settle in an apartment and take up studies in tourism. It took me six months to find a place adapted to my condition. Over a period of fifteen years I was able to achieve my studies. After each session, I took a trip; between each diploma received, I took a sabbatical year.

In the course of time, I obtained my qualifications in the DEC Tourism Techniques Program—a Bachelor Degree in communications and a Masters in planning and marketing. It is now my pleasure to travel the world and give conferences on the art of travelling with limited

mobility. I am convincing because to my credit I have visited Australia for one month, spent two weeks in China and in Spain, gone on a cruise, and enjoyed various sun destinations.

MY MINI ENTERPRISE

All these trips re-energize me and motivate my daily life which has been so shattered since that disastrous accident. Though I live alone in my apartment, I have no respite. I must wake up and go to bed at precise, regular hours even on holidays because of the care attendants who come to help me every morning and evening. They prepare for me everything that I will need for the day. I can no longer improvise or go out spontaneously: it is imperative that I reserve the paratransit on the eve of my outings.

I compare my life as a mini enterprise. I must manage my time in a way that everything is well integrated; I must think in terms of my personnel—their schedules and salaries and also of my professional activities. Besides this I volunteer for different associations: *Kérout*² — the *ABC Program*³ — *Vues et Voix*⁴. I am also a member of the Board of Directors for *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec* (Quebec's National Archives and Library).

MY ASSESSMENT

Do I regret my former life? I have never had any regrets even as I lay on my hospital bed. I certainly would not have chosen to be victim of an accident; however, I live my life one hundred percent to its fullest. In retrospect, I consider I have achieved many things. Perhaps even more than if I had had all my limbs, who knows? My quality of life comes from my inner strength, from my joy of living, from the support I receive from my family, especially my mother and friends.

Personally, I believe that to be happy in life one must adapt to what comes and be well surrounded. I love life and I accept it with its highs and its lows. 

¹ *Katimavik* (Inuktitut language, meaning "meeting place")

² *Kérout*: an organization whose mission is to make tourism and culture accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

³ *ABC Program*: teaches patients how to better manage the symptoms and treatments of their chronic diseases.

⁴ *Vues et Voix*: a broadcasting producer of audio books for visually impaired people.

PHOTO:

The author, medal bearer at the Rick Hansen 25th Anniversary relay

LIVING MY FAITH WITH MARY

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

A specialist in Marian Spirituality, also professor at the University of Dayton, in Ohio, U.S.A., Sister Celia Chua has just come back from a tour in Asia where she gave retreats to members of religious communities and presented a conference on Mary during the Inter-Asia Congress. A brief photo reportage will give you a glimpse of the people she met who live their faith with Mary.

A picture is worth a thousand words. These few photos tell us at what point the faith is on the rise in Asia. The religious are the most active within the Catholic Church in China and their membership is gradually increasing. They are over 2,000 between the ages of 25 to 55. Of course, there are shadows and lights along the journey, but most of these young women want to authentically walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ—"Sequela Christi" the ultimate standard of religious life.



JAPAN

Sisters of the Annunciation of the Virgin—a Community in Nagasaki. With Sister Celia they were led to take a deeper look at Mary's unconditional faith in God. The topic was most appropriate during this special year, set aside by Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, for Catholics around the world to rediscover the precious gift of Faith.

The Sisters prepare the meals for the local community. Generous people from the area share their harvest—the participants of the session are the happy beneficiaries.



JAPAN

Icon of the Madonna. A gift of China to the Annunciation Basilica in Nazareth (Israel).



Temporary professed Sisters of the Sacred Heart who are in the Diocese of Liaoning attended a retreat with Sr. Celia Chua, M.I.C.



CHINA



CHINA

The Militia of the Immaculata—A Community founded by Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Conventual Franciscan Friar and missionary who worked in Nagasaki, Japan, between the years 1930-1936. Today the Community counts over 250 members; they work mostly with the disabled. To the right - the Superior General of the Community with Sr. Celia Chua, M.I.C. and a few novices. Sister Celia gave them a session centered on: *Mary's Faith*.

A visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag- Pangasinan, a pilgrimage site nearby Manila. Note the adornment of the Virgin Mary—it is typical of the Philippine culture and tradition.



PHILIPPINES

Taiyuan, the capital and largest city of North China's Shanxi Province where Sr. Celia worked.



CHINA

In the Diocese of Liaoning, China, Sr. Celia met Bishop Pei. It is precisely in this Diocese that our first MIC pioneers worked for many years with the priests from the Society of Foreign Missions, one of whom was Bishop Adhémar Lapierre—the first PME missionary.

In the Philippines, where the Third Asia-Oceania Mariological Conference took place, Sr. Celia gave a conference on Mary and the Magnificat.



PHILIPPINES

THE ROSES OF GRATITUDE

On November 20, 2012 Mrs. Jeanne Registre appeared at the Pont-Viau Convent with an enormous bouquet of red and white roses. We all wondered what she was celebrating. Was it an anniversary? Sr. Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C. met with Mrs. Registre and discovered her touching love story as she relates it in this article.

Testimony by Jeanne Registre



November 20, 1949, Mirebalais, Haïti

On this date, four MIC Sisters arrived in my village to open a primary school. I was 14 years old then and waiting impatiently for that day. I was so anxious to begin my studies! I wanted to save my family from poverty by securing for them a brighter future. On that day, I started the long process of learning; for me this was a way to escape misery. This event played a great role towards my future and I will never forget it! This is why I want to celebrate it every year by offering a bouquet of red roses to the MIC Sisters. The number of roses is equal to the number of years since the foundation of the School Lucienne Estimé of Mirebalais. I now add a few white roses to recall the memory of the Sisters who founded my school and who are now enjoying eternal life: Sr. Jeannette Dufresne, Sr. Antoinette Raynault, Sr. Marguerite Julien and Sr. Mariette Bouillé.

After three years of schooling, I completed my primary certificate. I was already deeply attached to the Sisters. It was a real childlike love because they were like mothers to me. They greatly improved the living conditions of my family by donating food and clothes. They taught me all that I needed to learn and I felt I owed them everything. My offering of flowers today is the gesture of a grateful daughter whose story is still unfolding. Convinced by my determination to continue studying at a higher level, Sr. Antoinette decided to write to Canada and find a benefactor for me, *"I know someone who could help you... I must write and ask him."* Her appeal was successful. So I went to Secondary School at Cap-Haïtien; from there I went to the teacher training school that Sr. Jeannette had just opened in that city. I lived with the Sisters; I was very happy because I was walking steadily towards the realization of my dream. Deeply involved in my studies, I was even dreaming of studying some day at the Sorbonne! I, the little girl of Mirebalais!

The turns of a long-winding way

Now qualified as a French teacher, I accepted to go to Mali, a country of West Africa, where I earned much more than in

Haïti. How happy I was to be able to help members of my family to become professionals! At last, I had reached the purpose of my long years of study: *to provide the next generations with a better future!* My steps finally brought me to France and there I studied... at the Sorbonne! Another dream fulfilled! In 1971, I immigrated to Canada where I met again my dear M.I.C. Sisters who had retired at the Pont-Viau Convent. They continued to support and encourage me during my long career in education. I am now retired but I continue to supervise sessions for McGill University and I teach French as a second language for the School Board of Laval.

To summarize, let us say that my life is a beautiful love story between a little girl of Mirebalais and the M.I.C. Sisters who came to open a school in her Haïtian village in November 1949. My life was transformed on that day.

Gratitude in action

As I recall my past, I must mention the gift I managed to offer to my parish at Mirebalais in 1988—a painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, patroness of Haïti; it was done by Sr. Claire Thibault, Franciscan Missionary of Mary. She is a great artist who has painted several works of art illustrating important well-known historical figures of Canadian history, some of which are: Marguerite Bourgeois, Marie de l'Incarnation, Brother André, Kateri Tekakwitha. The painting bears these words: *Maman Marie, Be For Haïti, Perpetual Help*. This gift was a way for me to express my gratitude to the Blessed Virgin who watched over me and over my people. The presence of this great painting in our church is inspiring such a great Marian devotion that in the very near future it will become a place of pilgrimage. To this effect, the author of an article in the newspaper *Haïti Observateur*¹ wrote: *Mrs Registre prays that the Virgin Mary will open her heart, her cloak and her arms to inundate Haïti with the graces needed to save this country from misery and sickness*. Truly, this is my greatest wish and my sincere prayer.



Before being shipped to the Caribbean, the painting was exposed and admired in several places in Montreal. For example, it was shown for a few weeks at the Salon de l'Année Mariale and later at the Marie-Reine-du-Monde Sanctuary where Cardinal Grégoire invited the Haïtian community to pray the rosary during the month of May 1988.

Another gesture of gratitude that I was able to live with great joy was the pilgrimage to Lourdes and Rome. I offered this extraordinary trip to my two mothers, that is, my Haïtian mother, Mrs. Délivrine Bléus, and Sr. Antoinette Raynaud, M.I.C. This was a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to God and to the Blessed Virgin, gratefully experienced by three happy and overwhelmed women!

.....

Next Fall, always faithful to her self-given mission, we will see our friend Jeanne arrive at the convent with her bouquet of sixty-four red roses plus a few white ones, a beautiful symbol of her eternal gratitude towards the MIC Sisters.

On November 20, 1949, when a small school opened its doors in a little Haïtian village, who could have predicted the future of the young girl of Mirebalais who was dreaming of becoming a great teacher to help her family and her people? Mission accomplished, Jeanne!

Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

¹ *Haïti Observateur*,
June 10-17, 1988, p. 10

PHOTOS:

¹ Jeanne Registre standing in front of the painting which she offered to the church of Mirebalais.

Photo Credit: MIC

² MIC Chapel at Pont-Viau, Laval, QC—Jeanne Registre (left) with a friend Marie-Françoise Cadet—November 20, 2012

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

My Christmas Dream!

By Yolaine Lavoie, M.I.C.



Shortly after reading the Scripture passage on the birth of Jesus I fell asleep; I relate the dream I had that night...

A fairy appeared to me; her name was "Danna", the one who always gives good advice in novels. Standing by her side I felt confident, so I asked her to give me the appropriate words to express my best Christmas wishes to the people I love.

She offered me a trip to Bethlehem, which I immediately accepted. Hand-in-hand we were flying above the clouds. Luckily, it was just a dream! It was as if I were in a helicopter. Almost by enchantment the fairy left me at the entrance of a small village and told me, "Do you see, over there, that is where you must go. Now, I am leaving because you no longer need me." Here I was in an unknown place without a passport. My heart began beating rapidly though I did feel confident.

As I walked very quietly, I came closer to a little house whose door magically opened before me; it was as if someone felt my presence. At the same moment, I saw a beautiful young girl who smiled and invited me in. Her name was Mary. After becoming acquainted I expressed my wish of wanting to stay over; I would help her while waiting for the fairy to take me back. Mary willingly accepted because she had no family close-by and she was far from Nazareth, her home town.

I did not see Joseph; he was so discreet that I don't remember having seen him. Perhaps he was doing some woodwork to embellish the small home; as for me, I was busy sweeping and washing the baby's swaddling clothes. I loved taking him in my arms and rock him. Mary looked at me and smiled, she knew I loved her little boy. Then, she took the baby in her arms and said to me, "This child of mine, I give him to you. I trust you. Take him with you; he will be your joy and the joy of many others. You will be responsible for his growth in your life. Above all, do not keep him to yourself alone. You know... a candle can transmit its light to millions of people without ever losing its flame. Take him."

He is everyone's Child.

He is Joy, Peace and Love.

Immediately, I said to Mary, "But how is this possible? How can I take your infant?" With a gentle smile she replied, "My dear child, that is my secret!!!" And suddenly I woke up.

This dream can become a reality! Do we accept the responsibility of taking Jesus with us and like Mary give him to the world?

A MESSAGE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT 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*

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LIFE

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.

Life is beauty, admire it.

Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a promise, fulfill it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it.

Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it.

Life is a tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is a mystery, discover it.

Life is happiness, deserve it.

Life is love, appreciate it.

Life is precious, do not destroy it.

Life is life, fight for it.

Poem written by Mother Teresa

*Cf: Les dix plus belles prières
de Mère Teresa, Éd. Bayard, 2003*