

MIC MISSION NEWS

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To sow seeds of joy and hope

Since 1923



CANADA

SEEDS OF TODAY,
FLOWERS OF
TOMORROW

CUBA

VITALITY IN A
TINY BUD

IN FOCUS

*Today Shapes
the Future*



MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2015

OCTOBER

That with a missionary spirit the Christian communities of Asia may announce the Gospel to those who are still awaiting it.

NOVEMBER

We pray that pastors of the Church, with profound love for their flocks, may accompany them and enliven their hope.

DECEMBER

We pray for families, especially those who suffer, that they may find in the birth of Jesus a sign of certain hope.

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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Canada

EDITORIAL

A Promising Future

The Quebec poet, Félix Leclerc would say: *"Death is full of life!"* The autumn trees confirm that statement. Their bright coloured leaves soon give way to the winter snow. However, their bareness hide the substance, the germ of life, which will bud and bloom again in a new season. It promises life, and life there is!

It is the same for our lives. There are revitalizing moments, comforting words that brighten up our gloomy days. One day, my brother said to me: *"Life offers such good moments that it is worth bringing a child into the world... and if God promises a future full of hope and brightness in the hereafter, it is one more reason to give life to a child"*. An infant is a promise for the future; it is full of hope beyond all worries and doubts, surpassing all risks, all challenges. To live the present moment with enthusiasm is a source of joy and of a promising future; today prepares tomorrow.

Pope Francis dedicated this year to consecrated life. What challenges this life encounters today! God always keeps calling and young people from all nationalities have the courage to heed the call and leave all behind to follow Him. Last May, the general assembly of our MIC Institute was held; our **Sister Delia Regidor**, originally from the Philippines, was elected Superior General. A hopeful look into the future allowed us to write a new page of our history in the following terms: *With Mary of the Magnificat, we, as consecrated women will intensify the communion between us and the MIC provinces, thus committing ourselves passionately on new mission paths, bringing the hope and joy of the Gospel.*



In Cuba, despite the economic and political difficulties, the MIC Sisters believe in the Cuban people's vital forces thirsting for God. In Madagascar, the young MIC Sisters are dynamically involved in a new educational project; children from a remote area will be able to attend school, receive an education for a better life tomorrow. A number of volunteers devote themselves to the Church's mission, others collaborate in promoting the *MIC Mission News* magazine. Mission is within our reach and each action is a promise into the future.

The articles in this Fall issue tell us to walk courageously; today well lived maps the path of hope for a better tomorrow.

Marie-Paule Sanfey, m.i.c.

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

According to Délia, we have to foresee the future, do the best we can to prepare for it and then know how to leave the matter to God.

Throw the past into God's mercy, sanctify the present by a peaceful attention to do all things well, and for the future, commit yourself to the maternal providence of our good Master who can do all things and who loves you.

(August 27, 1915)

Nothing delays so much as wanting to go too fast because afterwards, endless time must be spent repairing what should not have been done so quickly...

(March 12, 1918)

To ensure the future and improvement of our little Community, I am prepared to make all the sacrifices . (August 15, 1921)

Do whatever you can; God will do the rest. (February 5, 1922)

God prepares the future and His ways do not always correspond with ours. I don't mean to say that our ways of doing are not good, but that God's plans often confound human wisdom.

(February 21, 1930)

I am convinced that the formation of the youth is the future of a country.

(June 14, 1931)

Not knowing the future is not a reason for doing nothing in the present. You cannot imagine things to be as clear as you would want them to be; but we do what we can in the present and we pray to be enlightened for the future.

(January 16, 1932)

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

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Most of our world is composed of middle and lower class families who often struggle to make ends meet and are never sure of tomorrow. Can we imagine that their plight could change so that LIFE would be the winner for all?

LIFE CAN BE THE VICTOR



By André Gadbois

I like to imagine what the future may have been for the man who was beaten and left by the wayside in Luke 10:25.37. Abandoned in the ditch by some bandits but saved by the loving care of a Samaritan, a group member despised by the society of his time, this bruised man no doubt felt the tender loving care come over him. I like to think that for the rest of his days this man, rescued and saved, was imprinted in his heart with the seal of kindness towards all, no matter the origin, the race. A passer-by who shows tenderness to those who are wounded always leaves behind a penetrating healing effect of a balm. Tenderness leaves its mark on the one who has been healed, to the point that he becomes concerned about the well being of other persons; it's like a good action becoming 'contagious'. It might sound absurd but it is true—try it!

This tenderness is a kind of balm that massages the heart, soothes it, makes it more flexible and sensitive; it can heal long-time wounds. At first, the user hesitates to apply this balm, feeling somewhat awkward and fearful; but the experience teaches him that the most humble care given to someone who is hurting, gives LIFE a chance to come out as the victor.

Daily news which is part of my life, keeps informing me that there are currently many people living in desperate conditions, unable to get out of their misery, and the good Samaritans are insufficient. When great catastrophic events take place, there are always the official care-takers who are at work with their admirable competence; however, there are numerous small catastrophes during a lifetime which are unattended and these can gradually lead

to greater disasters. I therefore ask myself, without judging or accusing anyone—could the family circle be a privileged place for its members to learn good behavior, to avoid hurtful insults or blame, to come to the rescue of those who are abandoned and left to themselves? Are families aware that, somewhat like Jesus, they are first hand pedagogues in the way they teach their children the **art of being attentive to the other**, and, by their example, show how to **apply the balm of tenderness**?

THE GOAL OF EDUCATION

The family has a direct influence on the children's development; parents guide them toward finding a true sense of self, they teach them to 'wait' without getting edgy, to share willingly what they have, to endure even though it bleeds. Parents play a fundamental role in forming the values of children. They are 'key' in helping children to humbly realize that they have strengths and limitations, that truth is to be spoken, that silence and solitude are important, that forgiveness is a must, that to serve the one most in need is very rewarding, and to be attentive to the environment is a responsibility.

The goal of education is to develop a child's capacity to an attentive awareness, to an awakened presence of the other. At a time when much of the focus is on play, distractions, entertainment, when the '*me, me, me*' takes center stage, when the '*me*' is too distracted to seeing dangers, there is a risk of making mistakes. Who then will help out the child before it is too late? There can be no other but the family; only the family can humanize our society. Educating a child to be attentively aware of the 'other' is a blessing for the whole of society.

Jesus did not propose a family model but sensitized his entourage to the presence and importance of little children "*for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these*" (Lk 18: 15.17). In other words, the fullness of LIFE is theirs. LIFE will be victorious not when the deficit zero will be reached or when churches will be full, but rather when society will become more humane, and when the family circle will

be a place where attentiveness and tenderness are learned. What do we teach our children today? To what kind of messages do we expose them? In what direction do we draw their attention? To whom do we entrust our children? What time do we have with them? And during those hours, what content, what kind of conversation do we engage in?

Regain the art of being PEDAGOGUES.

THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

Nowadays, those who govern the countries of our planet make troubling choices which endangers LIFE and poisons it in small doses: weapons of all sorts, pollution, monopoly, intimidation, dictatorships, reckless competition, GMOs... "*A good number of young people have become incapable of believing that others can interact with them in a friendly manner, with respect, generosity, and a spirit of cooperation or willingness to create newness together... We are under the impression that we have all lost confidence in the collective institutions.*"¹ For LIFE to be the victor, families will need to regain the art of being pedagogues—initiating the children to be attentively aware of the 'other' and teaching them to use the balm of tenderness. For this to happen, parents will need to be supported in more ways than one. Our society which stresses consumerism, trading, rivalry, competition is overlooking the aspect of solidarity. The law of the jungle is the motivation. However, when solidarity is put into practice, "*each member feels comforted and secure in its existence.*"² Today's families, no matter their background or ethnicity, are called to face with courage and determination the current challenges as well as the ones yet to come. LIFE will be the Victor when man will shape the world in keeping with human dignity. 🌿

¹ PETRELLA, Riccardo, *For a New Narrative of the World*, Écosociété, Montreal 2007, P. 63
² Ibid, P. 157.

PHOTO: Soloviova Liudmyla (Shutterstock)

FURTHER READING:

Lead Your Family Like Jesus
 – Powerful parenting principles...
 Authors: Ken Blanchard,
 Phil Hodges, Tricia Goyer (Tydale House Publishers, Inc. 2013)



TODAY IS TOMORROW'S FUTURE



As she tells us about her past mission experiences, Sister Suzette Jean demonstrates how daily life, no matter its color, is bearer of a seed that will grow in time.

PHOTOS:

¹ Sr. Suzette with members of the Agapè group, Puebla, Mexico

Photo Credit: Unknown

² Mexican children

Photo Credit: MIC

By Suzette Jean, M.I.C.

FIRST MISSIONARY DEPARTURE

It was in October 1973 that I took the plane to Madagascar, my first mission destination. Though this part of the world was unknown to me, I knew that I would be welcomed by my MIC Sisters. My first task was to learn the language and get acquainted with as much as I could. At that time, Madagascar had just gone through a revolution; this country which had been known as welcoming had now become hostile to strangers. I felt a certain urgency to go and meet real people; hearing voices over the radio was not enough. The people of the parish where we had a primary and secondary school were most sympathetic and my arrival did not go unnoticed. Thanks to music and singing I was soon in contact with students of all ages.

Throughout my thirty years lived on this magnificent island, I perfected the Malagasy language which fascinated me. At the age of thirty-two, I was eager to learn and discover everything about my newly adopted country; I was well served... Little by little, my heart and all

of my being became acculturated and I will always be a part of this lovely people. Hopefully, what I have left behind continues on in the hearts and voices of the Malagasy people.

YOUTH SOLIDARITY

Upon my return in Quebec, 2007, circumstances led me to work, once again, with the youth; first, at Benoit-Lacroix University Center, then with a MIC team for the Youth Solidarity Project. In 2010, after a time of formation, we sent young people for a mission experience of a few months in Peru; the following year, we opted for a mission project with the Amerindians at Lac Simon and Kitcisakik, located on the shores of Grand Lake Victoria, ninety kilometers southeast of Val-d'Or, Quebec. This experience was an eye opener for both the young people as well as their guides. What a discovery! It seemed we were in another country. The few houses built in the area of the Grand Lake Victoria have no electricity, no running water. These remote places, unknown to the public, remain mission territory in Quebec.

AGAPÈ

In 2014 AGAPÈ, in the region of Quebec, welcomed me as a member of their team. This Center is a community and Christian life training school for young adults between eighteen to thirty-five years of age. Founded by a laity, Denis Petitclerc, the Center can accommodate twelve participants. The formation includes four subjects from which the students can choose: **AGAPÈ-MISSION, AGAPÈ-VOCATION, AGAPÈ-FAITH, AGAPÈ-ART AND COMMUNICATION.** Each course lasts eighth months except **AGAPÈ-MISSION** which lasts eleven months. At the end of the latter, a three months exposure in mission is offered to the participants in the city of Puebla, Mexico.

On May 12, 2015, five participants including three young adults took the plane to Mexico: Joël, 23 years of age, Adrien 30, Yvan 33, Maria Fernanda who is Mexican and myself. The three young men committed themselves to a three month experience with the Mexican people, while Maria Fernanda was returning to her native land, in Vera Cruz, after a five week formation at the Center. Before leaving Mexico I passed the guiding torch to the coordinator, Mauro of Mexican origin.

What joy to go and learn from people of another country; as we went about our journey, we discovered the warmhearted personality of the Mexicans. Whether at Mass, at the parish, during catechetical courses, or on the streets, people were friendly and welcoming.

Their faith touched me deeply; despite all their sufferings, they are a people who demonstrate their great faith with enthusiasm. It is to be remembered that in the year 2000, Pope John-Paul II canonized Cristobal Magallanes and twenty-four Mexicans who were martyred in 1923 because of their faith. It is impossible to remain silent before the Blessed Virgin Mary's apparition, in 1531, to Juan Diego, a poor peasant, with little education. He also was canonized by Pope John-Paul II on July 31, 2002. Dear to the hearts of the Mexicans is the sanctuary of Our Lady of



Guadalupe, where millions of peoples and pilgrims from around the globe come to pray. As a missionary of the Immaculate Conception, my heart vibrated and was enriched by the discovery of such devotion at this sanctuary. Little is known about Our Lady of Guadalupe in Quebec and in Canada.

The AGAPÈ participants will have much to tell when they come back home. As for me I was surrounded, supported and inspired by the deep, convincing devotion of the Mexican people. On the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, there was a procession in the streets of two parishes. A prayerful crowd of people followed a truck on top of which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. The fervor of the Mexicans is such that on weekdays there are two Masses at the parish and five Masses on Sundays. Always, a large number of fervent people attend and participate.

SOWING DAY BY DAY

Yes, I am convinced that today is tomorrow's future. Each day holds the seed of life. I have experienced it so many times and to have lived this missionary journey with participants from AGAPÈ has been a blessing. Young people have always been for me a source of joy and dynamism. They need to see, to touch, to understand, they are the soil ready to receive... A transformation takes place when their hearts and their whole 'being' are touched by what they see and hear. When they understand the Good News, HOPE is revitalized... the fruit of a seed sown freely, gratuitously. ☺



ONE MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT FOR OUR PLANET



By Émilien Roscanu

PHOTO:

Eiffel Tower, Paris

Photo Credit: É. Roscanu

The Blue Planet, our planet, is in peril. Indeed, global warming is an ever increasing menace to our ecosystems, and has significant consequences for humans. Every day, industrial and human activities produce greenhouse gases which cause an increase in Earth's temperatures; the impact dramatically affects our planet. By our choices, our life-style, and the ways we consume goods and energy, we contaminate and harm all forms of life including our own human species. That we are destroying this beautiful Mother Earth is an act of disrespect towards our Creator.

WHAT TO DO

The first thing to do is to recognize the existence of the problem. Climate scientists from around the world agree that climate-warming trends are due to human activities; rigorous scientific research demonstrates that fact. In the past fifty years, the quantity of greenhouse gases we have been emitting into the

atmosphere has been constantly rising and is sixty times superior to the year 1990. The scientific community and world leaders agree to keep temperature increases to less than 2°Celsius in order to limit dangerously disruptive climate impacts. Up to now, global efforts in matters of climate change are insufficient to limit the rise of greenhouse gases; however, there is hope.

UNITY OF PRIME IMPORTANCE

The second step is to establish a plan of action, agree on the means to reaching a goal, and to be on course with timeline achievements. In a complex global context where consensus is more difficult to attain, it is imperative to double the effort and stand together, notwithstanding our differences, on a problem that is a menace for all of us. The diplomatic climate is tense on our planet. Russia, China, Germany, Canada and the United States, to name but a few, are waging a competitive war on various issues when the only one they should

engage in is war against greenhouse gas emissions. On a common front, the super powers of the world, as well as the lesser ones, have the duty to lead a green revolution that would aim at changing our mentalities and our ways of functioning. World leaders must engage in opening the way by tapping the collective imagination. Last November, the American President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping of China made a joint announcement concluding an historical accord targeting to cut greenhouse gas emissions in their respective countries. The United States and China together account for over 40% of the total CO² emissions of the planet. For the first time China, who is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, has agreed to cap its output by 2025 instead of 2030. By agreeing on clear objectives, the efforts will inject momentum into the global climate negotiations on the road to reaching a new climate agreement next year.

PARIS IN 2015

All the climate accords could be warrant for the future. A two-week Climate Change Conference will take place in Paris as of November 30 to December 15, 2015. The Conference objective is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement intended for all nations of the world to limit global warming to below 2°C. At a time when saving the planet is a necessity and more than ever urgent, all countries especially the powerful players must be included in the process; the recent Sino-American Accord represents a giant step in the right direction.

THE GREAT AND THE SMALL ALIKE

Not only the super powers must act, but as citizens of the world we also have a responsibility. To cross our arms and do nothing is to be an accomplice in the shameful and irreversible crime we are actually committing. We will never repeat it enough—each little action counts. Of course, we must recycle, compost, reduce our dependence on fossil energy sources,

consume local products, eat less meat, avoid wasting hot water and electricity, etc. All these small acts bring us closer to the common goal which is to preserve our planet, but these will be insufficient if not accompanied by daily awareness and rational efforts. Choices we make every day such as: the shops or stores we buy from, the products we use, the trademarks and clothing labels we look for, are choices that support practices of certain enterprises, therefore to buy is to vote. Each convinced individual represents dozens even hundreds of votes sent in the same direction. No matter where we are—at work, at school, at home each individual action has a repercussion; those persons who have at heart the ecological cause dare take giant steps towards building a different world, a different future for humanity. Keeping in mind the fragility of our planet, they strive for the environmental balance and its preservation. It's in everybody's interest.

Our Blue Planet is a SACRED HERITAGE.

OUR HERITAGE

Our Blue Planet is a sacred heritage. It is a gift from heaven and we must preserve it. To achieve our goal there is no miracle solution. We must conquer our ego, our individualism, our chronic wait-and-see policy; instead we must favor mutual aid, develop a conscious awareness and love for the people who are around us. Basically, it's a question of love. Do we love our planet enough to prevent its destruction? Do we love nature enough to save it from irreversible harm? Do we love our children enough and the future generations to leave them a world that is pleasant to live in?

Let us love one another. Let us act and act now. 

The Marriage of an Orphan

In September 1923, MIC Mission News/The Precursor of that era¹ invited us to a wedding. Ninety years later, it is difficult to imagine the context. However, those little stories of the past, with traditions so different to our times, show us the many changes that have taken place.

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



¹ *The Precursor*
Magazine, September
1923, P. 35

PHOTO:
A group of orphans
Photo Credit: MIC
Archives

The young girl's story—Born of poor but Christian parents, she was baptized while still an infant and received the name of Catherine. At the age of five years, she was given to a rich unmarried aunt, who six years later, becoming tired of her, sold her to a Chinaman of Canton, who made her a slave. One morning, going on an errand, she lost her way and her tears attracted the attention of a policeman who took her to a pagan orphanage. The Missionaries of Canton, having made a search, found her and entrusted her to us. Catherine was then twelve years old. During the years which passed after her arrival, our little orphan was prepared for her future duties. Certainly, our dear Catherine did not have the religious vocation, so it was necessary to think of her marrying. We turned to Father Thomas, Rector of the Cathedral, and we presented him with all of Catherine's qualities so that he might

find her a good match. Father Thomas was successful! Joseph Choy, a very serious young man, consented to consider the proposition. We had some repairs to be made at the convent, and it was Joseph, who was a good carpenter, who came to work for us. In reality, he wished to see the young girl at work. He was not satisfied, telling the Sisters confidentially that he found her not very practical, and he went to look for another. Several weeks passed. Joseph was still on the hunt for a more suitable woman, but he soon realized that parents of the women he courted demanded a dowry of \$300. to \$400. He could not pay such a fortune. Troubled, he came to the rectory. “*And Catherine?*” said Father, “*it will be necessary to return to your first choice!*”

In the meantime, Catherine prayed earnestly for Joseph's return. Two days later, Joseph's mother came to see her, and finding her quite to her taste, the marriage was set for April 17; the ceremony would be set off by the Easter decorations at the Cathedral, without extra expense. The arrangements were made and both Catherine and Joseph were content. A few days later, we received a gift—a roasted pork, decorated with flowers. According to the customs of the country, we returned to the bearer half of the head, two feet, the tail and a rib, being very careful to add a “lysi”. (a few cents in a red paper)

In order to keep in touch with our good Catherine, we have invited her to come and sew for us every day and in return, we pay her a small salary. Joseph also, now our carpenter, is of great service to us.

IN FOCUS

Today Shapes the Future

CONSECRATED LIFE

Seeds of Today, Flowers of the Future

Joy, audacity, openness, hope, gratitude, these are words that echo in the heart of those who live a consecrated life during this grace-filled year. Indeed, November 30, 2014, Pope Francis proclaimed a Year of Consecrated Life and it will conclude on February 2, 2016, a day dedicated yearly to consecrated life in the Church. In today's context, where the religious is no longer highly rated, is it still pertinent to speak of the consecrated life? What is its meaning? Skeptics would ask: Are young men and women still excited to adopt this kind of life? Can we observe some hope-filled buds opening and pointing towards a bright future?





By Micheline Marcoux,
M.I.C.

PHOTOS:

¹ Logo of the year dedicated
to consecrated life

²⁻³ MIC Scolastics

⁴ Scolastics in Quebec

Photos Credit: MIC

MULTIFORMS OF CONSECRATED LIFE

To speak about consecrated life is to speak about a love story. Gratuitously, the overwhelming loving gaze of God permeates the heart and soul of the chosen one, without any merit on the part of that person. Ever since Jesus initially called his disciples to follow him, he has continued calling others to leave all behind, to be with him and to continue his mission. The Holy Spirit is always active and continues calling individuals to a consecrated life, wholly dedicated to the service of God's Kingdom; it is a renewed gift given to humanity. In monastic life as well as in the apostolic or secular life the responses are diverse in modalities. The religious missionary life lived as the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* is one expression.

Sometimes we judge the vitality of consecrated life from what we see locally. When we broaden our horizons to the universal Church, we realize that consecrated life is far from being moribund. Many young men and women from around the world still respond, with passion and enthusiasm, to the call to follow Christ. In Quebec, fewer opt for the traditional communities, but many commit themselves to the new emerging ones, some of which issue from the former ones. These communities often combine the contemplative dimension to the apostolic life; they are sometimes mixed composed of men and women, or they are ecumenical and open to different states of life. The Holy Spirit is at work and forever creating newness.

THE SPIRIT'S SURPRISES

The Church is currently experiencing a refreshing renewal! Similar to Blessed John XXIII, Pope Francis is rapidly alter-

ing Catholicism's image; he is setting a new tone, a fresh standard for people and the Christian life. Consecrated life is not outdone. In the course of the year, Pope Francis invites us to reflect and act in light of the Gospel; we are *"to look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, embrace the future with hope"*. Nothing less!

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*—the joy of going forth to evangelize our world of today, as well as in his Apostolic Letter to all consecrated people on the occasion of the *Year of Consecrated Life*, the Pope invites us to be joyful which is the first attitude of all consecrated persons; it is an eloquent sign of the love which illuminates our lives. The apostolic effectiveness of consecrated life depends on the authenticity of our lives and people especially the youth are attracted by persons who radiate joy. I remember the words of my father on the day I entered the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*, at Pont-Viau in 1969: *"Here, the Sisters are joyful!"* I never forgot that remark.

PROPHETS FOR OUR TIMES

"Wake up the world!" urges Pope Francis. Go out to the peripheries; be with the people as missionary disciples and prophets for our times. In this world where we search for meaning in life, monks, nuns, religious, consecrated lay people reveal by who they are and by their benevolent acts the gratuitous love of God for each person.

Mission reveals God's love, gentleness and compassion: defend the dignity of the poor and deprived, guard the rights of women and children, respect life and creation, stand up for justice, for peace, promote work for the youth and the immigrants... we are called to be at the crossroads where humanity is threatened. At the heart of it, is the Gospel meditated and shared. Men and women of prayer, united in communities that are becoming more and more international, intercultural and intergenerational, offer an alternative model in 'living together' all the while accepting and respecting the possible differences.

A PROPOSED COLLABORATION

It is an additional grace that the *Year of Consecrated Life* is followed by the *Synod on the Family* which will take place in October. Nowadays, we talk about promoting a culture of vocation—that is, whatever vocation we are called to, it first has to be nurtured. The family and Christian community play a vital role in its development, beginning with the faith education of the child. In agreement, can we propose and support mobilizing projects that respond to the youth's heart-warming enthusiasm and dedication? Do we still know how to speak with them, to hear them, to question them, to fill them with a sense of wonder?

Recent canonizations and beatifications in our Church as well as the feasts that highlight the anniversary of a foundation or of a birth—such as our Foundress, Délia Tétreault's 150th birthday—are occasions for the public to witness and admire the work of God in the hearts of so many who have heard His call and responded. These individuals are models and sources of inspiration particularly for the young who thirst for the ideal and who are ready for service. Also, for the past thirty years, lay people have been knocking at the doors of religious communities wanting to live, within their capacity, the mission of a particular institute, as well as the charism and spirituality of the founder. Those who live the consecrated life, are they not called to be light bearers, transmitting life at the heart of the Church?

A PROMISING FUTURE

In some countries, consecrated life is going through its winter season. However, faith and experience teach us that without any doubt a new spring will appear. Today's humble sowing, is tomorrow's gestation. It is the mysterious fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit... *"Nothing is impossible with God"* (Lk 1.37) declared the Angel to Mary. This is an invitation to remain missionary disciples, with our hearts full of hope. 



A Bush School in Tananarive

Pope Francis invites all Christians to go work in remote areas. The Sisters of Madagascar heard the call. Experienced in the field of education, three young MIC Sisters took the road towards the less fortunate to start a school in a region that is yet to be developed.

By Violette Veroniaina Berisoa, M.I.C., Nadya Rakotonirina, M.I.C., Edwige Raolinirina, M.I.C.



PHOTOS: ¹The local people welcome the Sisters to their house (seen in the background); ²Children playing on the school ground (Saint-Joseph School in the background); ³Some new desks;

In September 2013, we arrived at the Ambatofotsy mission which is located in the Province of Tananarive, capital of Madagascar. The area's population is six thousand inhabitants.

FIRST CONTACT—DISCOVER THE MILIEU

We began our mission by exploring this little village which is populated by immigrants. The people have only two resources: agriculture which is often affected by bad weather and also by the grasshoppers that devastate the harvests in no time; cattle-raising is another means of living, however, cattle rustlers are present and in one night they can steal over four hundred animals. Notwithstanding their troubles, the people are courageous, welcoming and smiling.

There are two primary schools: one is public the other is parochial. When the Bishop asked us to be in charge of the parochial school named Saint Joseph, the shed-like building was too small to welcome all the children, so the church building welcomed a certain number. With time we hope to recruit all the children who do not have the chance to study. We have confidence in our mission because parents appreciate the education given in a confessional school.

Economically, most of the parents have difficulty providing for the basic needs of their children. However, when they cannot pay the school fees, they bring eggs, vegetables and sometimes a chicken to compensate. We receive these gifts with much gratitude.

In order to obtain a more abundant harvest, the women try to improve the way they cultivate the land. Because of the poor road conditions only trucks can circulate and merchants come in the area during harvest time to buy at the lowest price.

IN CONTACT WITH THE PARENTS

We have at heart to put all our energies in restructuring Saint-Joseph School in order to enhance the intellectual, spiritual and educational level of the children. With

this in mind, a new school has been built. These little ones have the right to study in a suitable school like all the others who are better off. For this reason, we must help parents understand the importance of education; they must be informed that their children deserve to learn if they are to have a better tomorrow.

As in any kind of project, beginnings can be difficult. We do not have enough desks nor teaching materials. We must convince parents that their children's education is of such importance that they must pay a part of the school fees. Though they are poor, they must bring some contribution to help pay the teachers' salaries, plus this would allow us to give the teachers a human and psychological formation which would enrich them professionally. Our mission in this school is to have a close relationship with the children and their parents while respecting the reality of each family. Our Pope Francis encourages us when he writes in his Apostolic Exhortation—*The Joy of the Gospel*, no.186:

*Our faith in Christ, who became poor,
and was always close to the poor and outcast,
is the basis of our concern for the integral
development of society's most
neglected members.*

Today, we extend our hand to ask for your help in supporting the Saint Joseph School of Ambatofotsy in Tananarive. Your generous contribution sent in this part of the world would be greatly appreciated and your solidarity would be most meaningful to us and our people. We assure you of our prayers and we ask you to remember us in your prayers! 🙏



⁴⁵Children playing near the church building; Photos Credit: MIC

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Ways of Sharing the MISSION

WOMAN OF THE VISITATION

(from the French song: *Femme de visitation*, by Richard Vidal)

Humble Mary took the road.
Her joyful heart and quick steps
led her to her cousin Elizabeth.

She went to share, to give.
Mary, the woman
who welcomed the Spirit;
Mary, the woman attentive to life!

Like Mary, I take the road.
Quick are my steps,
opened are my hands;
ready to serve, ready to help.
I listen attentively
to the broken lives.

Heart surrounded by the sun!
Heart announcing
the Marvelous One!

Like Mary, I visit you
the stranger, the little one.
I bring hope to your troubles,
I bring love to your weariness.

Heart humbly generous!
Heart tenderly welcoming!

O Mother of God,
Who brought Life to the world,
You are woman of the visitation,
You are, O Mary, a marvel of Love!

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Pope Francis' new approach is dynamic, inspiring Christians, inviting all Catholics to leave their comfort zones and boldly be missionary disciples, which he qualifies as the "Church going forth".

To be missionary disciples is to dare be among the 72 disciples who, following Jesus, went to towns and villages announcing the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ. When we feel a certain inner drive to give of ourselves as volunteers, in the footsteps of the disciples, our response demands a great spirit of faith and dedication. Today, I want to give homage to all the collaborators of our mission magazine *MIC Mission News/Le Précurseur*. These men and women take part in the Church's mission and sow the Word of God in their own milieu. Obviously, this is not an easy task: making several phone calls, walking the neighborhood streets, knocking at doors and asking for a subscription or a renewal to a mission magazine, all of this demands a good amount of selflessness and a profound conviction that our world is in need of an invigorating presence, of a friendly, compassionate and encouraging contact.

Following the example of Mary, on the road of Ein Karem, who went to help her cousin Elizabeth, those of you who take the road to collect subscriptions have the opportunity of communicating to the people they meet a message of joy and hope as indicated by the leitmotiv of our mission magazine *TO SOW SEEDS OF JOY AND HOPE*. You are the "Church going forth" and your benevolent presence means more than the magazine you are offering. You are our representatives and you reassure the subscribers of our prayers which are said for all their personal intentions.

Your precious collaboration guarantees the continuity of our mission work. This year, we are celebrating the 95th anniversary of our publication *MIC Mission News/Le Précurseur*, and this is thanks to your great generosity. Year after year you have been faithful and ready to serve; you have helped us awaken and spread the missionary spirit as our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, so deeply wished us to do. With gratitude we dedicate to each one of you the beautiful song of Mary, *Woman of the Visitation*.

An INVITATION

We will always need generous people like you who by their solidarity, sharing, moral and spiritual support continue the mission of Jesus. Our sincere thank you for the missionary flame which you keep alight by way of our mission magazine; Délia Tétreault would say: *When you receive a new subscription or a renewal, it is a way of helping missionaries in their work, it is promoting the work of the Lord in the mission fields. (1920)*

MIC Mission News/Le Précurseur is a means to meet peoples and a way to nourish our missionary faith. The texts open our minds and hearts to reflection, to new perspectives in line with the New Evangelization.

The VALUES we uphold:

- Living the Gospel on a daily basis
- Solidarity with the poor and the marginalized
- Women's role in society
- Justice and conservation of the planet

The MISSION:

- To help spread the Good News of Christ's peace and love, here and abroad
- To reach out to our brothers and sisters around the world
- To offer a helping hand to the missionaries

If you have a desire to become a collaborator, contact Mrs. Jocelyne Dallaire, our promotion agent and president of the AsMIC (Associates):

Telephone: 450-663-6460 ext. 5304

Cell: 438-764-5535

E-mail: promotion@pressemic.org

This is a way to share the mission. Be with us missionary disciples and offer a subscription to your parents, relatives, friends...

THANK YOU
for your support!



Thank you to Chantal Lebel for her 30 years of collaboration in promoting our magazine.



Thank you to Mariette Veilleux for her 30 years of collaboration in promoting our magazine.



Thank you to Mr. Conrad Proulx who generously took over, after his mother passed away; she had been a faithful collaborator for over thirty years.

Délia Tétreault tells us:
"When you walk by a house, say one Hail Mary, that joy and happiness may enter into that home. If they find joy, they will tend to thank God for His blessings."



Vitality in a Tiny Bud

The little bud containing life characterizes the mission of our MIC Sisters in Cuba. Seven very active Sisters reach out to the youth, the families and also work in parishes. They sow words of encouragement, and proclaim Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the few positive steps, the social context generates frustration and provokes emigration especially among the youth.



By Amelia Mejides
Juan, M.I.C.

PHOTOS:

¹ Sr. Bernadeta Collazo, M.I.C.

² Sr. Gloria Perez, M.I.C.

Photos Credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Our country is going through a historical moment in terms of its demographic situation. In the last few years, the population has shown a decrease in numbers and an escalation of the aging factor. The decrease in numbers is perceptible; it is the result of a lower birth rate and of increased migration. Since there is no link between the country's social plan and the people's personal plans, frustration is the outcome. The State must offer seniors dignified institutions as well as proper programs that will contribute to their well-being, peace and joy in the latter part of their lives.

Health, education, and sports which had important results in past decades are now at a standstill, if not in a process of decline. However, people gladly welcome a few changes, such as the return of high schools and pre-university institutions in the cities, the authorization to sell or buy property and vehicles, the possibility to create a small private or family enterprise, and free access to hotels for Cubans. Regardless of these changes, one can perceive among many citizens an urgent expectation of deeper and more needed reforms that will enable them to solve pressing problems that generate anguish and uncertainty. There is a clear demand for daily public transportation, clothing, food and other longer term needs such as lodging and social security pensions.

Several groups of people wish they could count on greater social autonomy

that would enable them to develop projects convivial with civilized accepted norms and responsive to specific needs that unite and energize various human groups in their search for the common good, without having to wait for an answer and solutions from the government.

THE CUBAN PEOPLE

We, the Cuban people, have the ability to store up great reserves of joy, creativity and talent. We are spontaneous and extraverted people, capable of struggling for life; we are patient, friendly and courageous. We strongly believe in the importance of work, which is indispensable for the country to move forward, but at the same time, we show a lack of honesty and responsibility at work. There is a major crisis of human and evangelical values.

Our people express their religiosity in multiple and varied ways. Many of these expressions externalize popular beliefs based on the Catholic faith while others originate in African-based traditions. Such diversity shows that the Cuban people are really alive, that they thirst for God and are in search for meaning in their life.

The post-modern mentality is increasingly obvious. Globalization is invading us every day, step by step. In the last few years, the use of cellular phones and "memory" gadgets is more and more widespread. However, access to the internet continues to be very limited. We long to be better informed and better connected.



On December 17, 2014, the governments of Cuba and the United States took a historic step by declaring their decision to work together to re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries, relations that have been severed for more than fifty years. This announcement was greeted by the people with great enthusiasm but also with a bit of distrust. Clearly, such a decision should bring about, in the political arena of both countries, certain changes favorable to the people.

THE ECCLESIAL CONTEXT

In recent past, we lived various events that were most meaningful: the three missionary years in preparation for the Jubilee Year; the journey of the image of Our Lady of Charity around the Island and the Marian Jubilee Year recalling the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the image of Our Lady of Charity; the visit of Pope Benedict XVI and the Year of Faith. All these events contributed in reviving our missionary spirit and enabled us to live in communion with the Continental mission as proposed by the Aparecida Episcopal Conference.

Though 60% of the Cubans are baptized Catholics, approximately 2% of the population participates at the Sunday Eucharist. However, they live by the Christian values

that give a face to our culture. In most parishes, efforts are exerted to make the Mission a high priority. Some have succeeded in permeating the life of their communities with the missionary spirit. One of the Spirit's greatest gifts is the existence of the catechumenate where the future of Church is taking shape. It's a major challenge and a beautiful one because most of those who are part of these communities are adults and young people who have asked to be initiated into the faith.

The social and charitable dimensions of faith are expressed in our communities through multiple initiatives of service and through the Caritas teams—volunteers of the Health Care Ministry and the Ministry of reconciliation.

THE MIC LIFE IN THIS CONTEXT

As Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception we want to live with the increasing awareness that our mission is to follow Jesus with joy as credible witnesses to fraternal living and we wish to be more involved with the marginalized people who live by the wayside and whose rights are not being heard. We participate in parish liturgical animation, in sacramental preparation, and in the formation of future lay leaders. Furthermore, we work with youth groups at the par-

ish level; we attend their meetings and welcome them in our fraternities. Our other commitments are within the catechumenate level, the missionary childhood movement and we provide special attention to handicapped children and their families. We also contribute to the magazine of the Catholic Women's Movement.

We coordinate the activities that take place at the Spiritual Renewal Center in Colon while also animating retreats with a Jesuit team and giving workshops with ES.PE.RE. (Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation).

Throughout very difficult contexts, we have walked the long walk with our Cuban brothers and sisters but we are encouraged by their openness, positive attitude, and enthusiasm in collaborating with the Church in its diverse projects. Though our MIC group is limited we are aware that God works through our frailty, weakness and littleness and all He wants is our unconditional love and offering. This tiny little bud will bloom and within it will be the seeds of life. We are convinced, as MIC Sisters in Cuba, that our missionary spirituality of Thanksgiving holds a bright future on the Cuban soil. ♡

In a world where time swiftly goes by and where money imposes its culture, there are “angels” who appear on the scene. Without imposing themselves and without calculating their time, they lend a helping hand. No need to look very far to find those “angels”... they are close to you. They are the volunteers, discreet and dedicated, always ready to offer their generous support.

Pass it on

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE



By Nicole Joly, M.I.C.,
In charge of
Mission Awareness

A few months ago, during my annual missionary visit at St.Thècle Parish, in the Diocese of Trois-Rivières, Quebec, I met a lady whose life is one of devotedness. I would like to dedicate this article to Ms. Huguette Trudel in gratitude for her twenty years of generous work as a collaborator to our magazine *MIC Mission News/Le Précurseur*.

Huguette Trudel is the second in a family of ten children. After her studies at the Domestic Science School of St. Germaine-de-Dorchester in Quebec, she was ready for her life-long career. In 1963 she was offered work as housekeeper at the parish rectory; the first pastor was Father André Morin who lived with his mother and another vicar. Huguette cooked for them and for the many visitors who dropped by, including the twelve siblings of Father Morin who came occasionally to visit their mother. The rectory has twenty-four rooms, needless to say that besides cooking, Huguette is kept busy keeping the large rectory clean. In a span of fifty-two years only two pastors have been appointed to the parish. With the arrival of Father Gérald Baril, Huguette adds to her many chores that of secretarial work. However, this does not stop her from volunteering her time at the municipal level; there is no comparison to her capacity of adaptation and devotedness.

Well known for her generosity and warm hospitality, Huguette finds time to organize flea markets to the benefit of missions and conducts fundraisers for the Canadian Cancer Society. At one time, she was on a committee governing the care of

young participants in the Katimavik¹ program and for the past forty years she has been in charge of the Christmas baskets for the poor. With pride, she speaks about the Lebanese community who gathers at St.Thècle Parish to pray their patron saint.

Huguette's personality stands out; she is recognized by her peers as a creative woman, opened and always ready to serve. Every year the regional ministry for Seniors presents a medal of honor to an outstanding personality who, on a volunteer basis, has devoted much time and energy to help various organizations as well as to individuals in need. Last January, Ms. Trudel received the award winning title: **“The Regional Volunteer”**; however, another surprise was awaiting her. To reward the value of her commitment, she received an apostolic blessing from Pope Francis which she treasures with joy.

A CREATIVE MISSIONARY AT WORK

While visiting the parish, I was amazed to see how this lady passed on our mission magazine to the next generation. Huguette has been organizing funeral receptions for the past thirty-five years; she often receives a bonus for her service. When the deceased was a subscriber to our mission magazine, she asks family members if one or another would agree to pursue their parents or relatives tradition by accepting to receive the *MIC Mission News/Le Précurseur*. The reply being positive, Huguette pays the first subscription with the bonuses she receives; after one year, the relative assumes continuity. By renewing the subscription, the Mission work continues being supported by a generous heart. This year, Huguette

¹ KATIMAVIK—means “meeting place” in the Inuit language.

It is a registered organization which educates Canadian youth through volunteer work.

collected eighteen subscriptions; what a beautiful way of being one with us. Within her capacity she keeps the mission spirit alive and helps us implement our leitmotif: *to sow seeds of joy and hope*, here and abroad.

Before leaving the parish, she offered me a box of stamps and Christmas cards which she had collected for the missions. She has established a link between us and the St. Thècle Community and we are most grateful.

A FRIENDLY WELCOME—A PRIORITY

The Catholic tradition has always invited us to universal communion between the different Churches. Last April, when Sr. Anita Perron and myself were invited to St. Thècle parish to give a homily and speak about our mission experiences we were simply delighted. During the Saturday and Sunday Masses we welcomed the parishioners and shared with them the Word of God.

While at the parish, we had the opportunity of meeting two lay missionaries, Alain and Paul. They invited us to their dinner table; we had the pleasure of hearing about their mission commitments, their spirituality, and their talents. Not only did we share a meal, but also our insights, and

our love of life. Later in the day, the pastor, Fr. Baril and Ms. Huguette Trudel invited us to share the evening meal with them. We again felt most privileged to sit around their table. The enriching conversation energized us in pursuing our mission work and Ms. Trudel's openness, dedication and love of life will be long remembered.

Very much like the disciples of Emmaus, we came back home enthused and happy to communicate to our Sisters: "*We have seen the Lord!*" and our hearts remain most grateful. 

A Tribute to our Volunteers!

*Congratulations
to our regional volunteer
of the year—2014*



PHOTO:

Mrs. Huguette Trudel

Original Illustration:

Francine Beaulieu

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Eternally Happy in His Kingdom

There was a great multitude that no one could count,
from every nation, tribe, people and language. (Rev 7:9)



Jeannette Pinard, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint Christine)
1911-2015
Nicolet, Quebec

Sister Jeannette lived through many events in her 104 years of life. In 1930, the train brought her to our Novitiate where she began her 'vocational business training' as she would say. She had the chance of knowing our Venerable Foundress, who discovered that Jeannette had a talent in engineering. Thus, she was entrusted the expensive electric and plumbing repairs; for forty years she was the community's engineer. The following thirty years Jeannette was on the road promoting our mission magazine. With enthusiasm she visited the dioceses of Nicolet and Trois-Rivières. Until the very end, Sr. Jeannette radiated peace and serenity. With you, dear Sister, we give thanks.



Kimiko Fujimatsu, M.I.C.
1937-2015
Azuma Cho, Tokyo, Japan

She was an evangelizer and put into practice the teaching of Pope Francis who speaks about the necessity and beauty of the first evangelization; that is precisely what Sr. Kimiko did. While being directress at Koriyama's kindergarten, Sister taught, for twenty years, catechesis to non-Christian children. She was also an active member of the city's Kindergarten Association. Sister Kimiko entered our Institute in 1966 and throughout her consecrated life she exhibited a dynamic missionary spirit; without warning she left us at 3:00 a.m last March. Thank you, Sister Kimiko, for your faithfulness in spreading the Good News.



Paule Charpentier, M.I.C.
(Sr. Paul-de-Damas)
1917-2015
L'Avenir, Quebec

Wonderment was a beautiful characteristic of Sr. Paule. In 1940, she entered our Novitiate and her talent in teaching left a mark on her students, in Haiti as well as in Quebec; not only did they respect and admire their teacher but they highly succeeded in their studies. Blessed with a sound judgment, she was also a good listener and a joyful, generous, pleasant companion. Sr. Paule was a writer, she expressed her passing away as follows: "When we have said everything for the reason we came, all things done, it is time to part. (...) To go where Beauty is, fulfilled with all the Blessings God bestowed upon me." Sr. Paule, may you be forever in wonderment.



Irène Hétu, M.I.C.
(Sr. Saint Irène)
1926-2015
Montreal, Quebec

Sister Irène passed away August 8, seventy-two years after her entrance date at our Novitiate. In 1943, her sisters Jeannette, Annette and Laurette were already members of the MIC Community and were happy to welcome Irène. One year later, Hélène followed the example of her sisters and entered our Community. Sister Irène, though she never went abroad, was a missionary in her own homeland. She worked at Saint Justine's hospital for twenty years as sacristan, a legendary that remains. We called her the "smiling nun", she radiated happiness. Dear Sister Irène, now that you are rejoicing in the heavenly kingdom intercede for us.



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Welcoming the Promise!

Christmas is the great Christian feast; but above all, it is the joy of a Promise. God sent into our world the Promise of a loving Presence named Jesus. This loving Presence lives on within us; our Savior walks with us in our tribulations as well as in our joys.

A time is given us to prepare our hearts. The Advent season invites us to welcome and share this loving Presence through our attentiveness, given in prayer and deeds, accomplishing a mission that is within our reach.

If we could gather all those sparkling lights which decorate the Christmas trees and transform them into wishes of peace and happiness, joy would forever reign on our Earth.

Let us carry this Promise of joy to all the persons who will cross our path today, tomorrow and throughout the coming year.

Wishing you a Grace-filled Christmas and may you be blessed with an abundance of the precious things in life: HEALTH, HAPPINESS and enduring FRIENDSHIPS.

