



MIC MISSION NEWS

SPECIAL
edition

VIRTUAL CENTER OF THE MIC
HISTORICAL MISSIONARY MEMORY
A BRIEF LOOK

NOVEMBER
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CONTENT

3 A TREASURE TROVE TO DISCOVER

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

5 “LE PRÉCURSEUR”—THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME

Audrey Charland

9 A LUMINOUS CENTENARIAN, ON THE WINGS OF PRAYER

Dialogue with Sr. Réjane Gaudet, M.I.C.

Suzanne Boivin

10 A HEART OPEN TO THE WORLD

Dialogue with Sr. Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

Suzanne Boivin

12 MIC MISSIONARY PRESS—PERSONNEL

Virtual Center of the MIC
Historical Missionary Memory

15 A BRIEF LOOK

22 MEMBERSHIP

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A Treasure Trove TO DISCOVER

*As **Le Précurseur** (1920) and the MIC Mission News (English version, 1923) are approaching their centennial, we at the MIC Missionary Press decided to become citizens of the modern world and cultivate an online presence. The Virtual Center of the MIC Historical Missionary Memory was created with the goal of sharing our precious Canadian heritage with the scientific community and the public at large.*

The history of the MIC Missionary Press is an integral part of Délia Tétreault's dream. Foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Délia hoped the magazines would reach every Christian home in Quebec where faith was deeply rooted and where mission awareness was welcomed. Many men and women became priests and religious missionaries after reading our publications. Inspired by our outreach abroad, our intercultural experiences, and becoming more aware of the growing need to spread the Good News throughout the world, those young adults responded to the Call.

For nearly one hundred years, the MIC Sisters have enthusiastically headed the publication. Some have promoted the magazine by going door-to-door, a necessary part of every young missionary's formation back then. Others have travelled thousands of kilometers to endorse the magazine, visiting cities and towns in Quebec, Ontario, and even the United States. The Sisters have worked passionately and admirably on every aspect of the magazine, from drafting and layout to printing and shipping. With time, collaborators and lay employees assumed some responsibilities working closely with the MIC personnel.

In the 1950s, the magazines' circulation reached more than 172,000 copies. Is there anyone in Quebec who isn't familiar with *Le Précurseur* or its English counterpart, the *MIC Mission News*? For this reason, among others, the MIC publications are considered part of our "Canadian heritage". They are a true treasure trove of information for students, historians, and anyone interested in our history.

Our decision to launch the Virtual Center was inspired by one of Délia Tétreault's original goals, first established in the early 20th century—to share the values and lived experiences of the mission's pioneers. Through virtual communication, we hope to ensure the sustainability of our mission and our continued involvement in making the world a better place in the spirit of the magazines' leitmotiv: *To sow joy and hope*. A legacy for today and tomorrow!

I WANT ESPECIALLY TO THANK:

CAROLE GUÉVIN, Assistant Directress of M.I.C. Missionary Press, who initiated and spearheaded the project with unwavering conviction and determination.

CATHERINE FOISY, Professor of Religious Sciences at *Université du Québec à Montréal*, who showed great interest in the project.

AUDREY CHARLAND, Communication and Development Officer, who handled the project design and layout. Audrey worked with enthusiasm and dedication on every task and responsibility entrusted to her. Her professionalism and attention to details allowed us to create a dynamic, interesting and user-friendly website.

ADDITIONAL THANKS TO:

DENIS PÉPIN, General Director of *Archives Lanaudière* and his team who was responsible for digitizing 976 magazines and creating the indexes.

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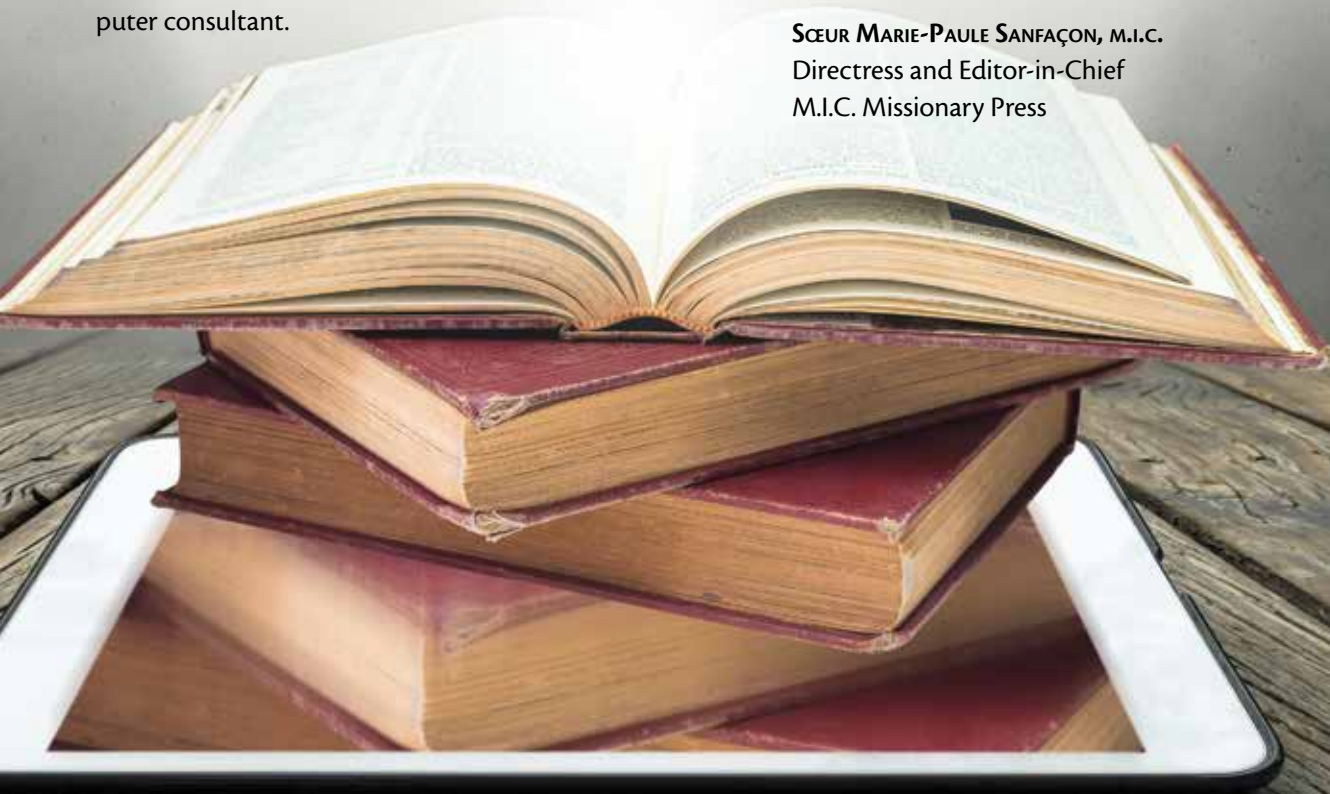
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Exploring our virtual treasure trove means discovering the deepest dreams and motivations of those missionaries who left their country for a lifetime. They spent their lives immersed in countries and cultures completely unknown to them, and the Virtual Center allows you to follow them on their journeys. You can discover the leprosariums in Asia, the Maoist Cultural Revolution, the Second World War... the aboriginal tribes in the Philippines, the evolution of Africa and the engagement of the Americas. So many surprises awaited those young women.

We invite you to delve into the heart of their stories; their adventures of then and now will never cease to surprise you. ✱

SŒUR MARIE-PAULE SANFAÇON, M.I.C.
Directress and Editor-in-Chief
M.I.C. Missionary Press



“LE PRÉCURSEUR”—The Story Behind The Name

AUDREY CHARLAND



Propelled by her unshakeable faith and certainty of her vocation, Délia Tétreault, known in her religious community as Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, founded the Missionary Institute in 1902. For many years she had dreamed of founding a congregation based on her missionary ideals, and when she finally did, her success sparked a flame that only burned brighter with the passage of time. The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception was Canada's first religious missionary congregation for women. The congregation quickly spread as an increasing number of Sisters travelled to different continents, bringing their missionary vocation to Asia, Oceania, North America, and Latin America. Coordinating the Institute's international activities was very taxing, but Délia Tétreault refused to limit their efforts abroad. She wanted the mission to be felt both at home and abroad.



Délia's desire to carry her faith far and wide eventually led to the establishment of the Missionary Press. In May 1920, the very first issue of *Le Précurseur* saw the light of day. Less than three years later, its English counterpart, *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News), was added to circulation. The magazine was named after the Lord's precursor, Saint John the Baptist, who introduced the Lord to the Bible's chosen people. Later, the English title changed to the *MIC Mission News*, which was a reference to the Good News shared throughout the world.

Originally, the distribution of the magazines also served to promote the missionary way of life and inspire young women to join the cause. The magazines also allowed par-

ents to receive precious news from their children abroad. Through first-person accounts and correspondence, *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News) informed readers about different cultures and traditions, promoted prayer and spiritual reflection, and spread the Christian faith.

Ever since its humble beginnings, the MIC Missionary Press team was forced to adapt to major social changes occurring in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. When flipping through the 975 issues that make up our archives, readers can see how much the publications have evolved over time: layouts changed, colour was introduced, and computer graphics improved dramatically. More recently, our digital version was made available. The magazines adopted a fresh new look, and their content soon followed. Slowly but surely, our writers began to address national and international topics of interest.



Despite all of these changes, the press's core message hasn't changed. Our congregation's unique missionary vision is still implicit in every article. *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News) will soon be celebrating its 100th birthday, and throughout the years, it has continued to occupy an important place in Quebec's literary landscape. Our magazines are distinctive; whereas many publications have migrated to digital, we continue to distribute print issues. Today they are read around the world and renowned for their quality, and for this reason we have every reason to believe that our foundress' avant-garde spirit will live on, from generation to generation.

THERE WERE STILL MANY CROSSES

Despite the undeniable success of *Le Précurseur* and *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News), it would be naïve to think that we never experienced any setbacks along the way, or that our life was always rosy. Many roses did grow on our path, but their beauty was equalled by the sharpness of their thorns. In most cases, our biggest successes came at a high cost. The ministry of the MIC Missionary Press was no exception. We've chosen to bring to light the various road-

blocks encountered to help our readers understand the scope of our undertaking, nearly 100 years in the making.

Evidently, managing two publications proved to be a daunting task. At the beginning, more than 170,000 copies were printed every year. What's more, in its not-so-distant past, *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News) was a relatively thick volume that was circulated six times annually.

Published in two languages and distributed across oceans, the magazine was only made possible thanks to the countless employees and volunteers who worked diligently on



every stage of development (writing, illustrating, editing, correcting, printing, promoting, distributing, directing, etc.). Many missionaries worked in the shadows, doing work that was secondary but nonetheless essential. Our personnel was largely made up of missionary Sisters, and their advancing age eventually became problematic. Hiring secular employees was the only possible solution; it allowed us to offer relief to the Sisters, who fought valiantly at the front lines despite their old age. **Two veterans** and “retirees” from the MIC Missionary Press share personal stories about their time there, giving us a rare and intimate glimpse into their daily routine.



There were administrative challenges, such as the frequent shift in management at *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News). As the English publication changed hands, it alternated between a literal translation of the French magazine and a brochure-type document independent from *Le Précurseur*. There were also logistical issues, such as finding quality photographs. At first, the magazine had five or six photos per issue, each one depicting missionary work in Asia. These would miraculously arrive after a long trip by sea mail. Nowadays, despite new technologies and the speed of Internet transmissions, it's very difficult to obtain good photographs for our articles. There isn't enough time, the work is arduous, and interest is not what it used to be.

When we weren't facing internal obstacles, we had external issues to contend with. For example, on several occasions, our writing team was forced to censor articles. Certain subjects and taboos required particular tact, or simply had to remain unsaid in order to ensure the safety of our Sisters abroad, especially those stationed in countries with social and political ideals that conflicted with ours.

Finally, one difficulty could not be avoided: our financial situation. As our subscribers continued to diminish, promotion became increasingly difficult, and other unfore-

seen problems obstructed our path. Consequently, the MIC Missionary Press was forced to make some heart-breaking budget cuts over the years.

In light of these changes, we must take a positive outlook. The dedicated efforts and determination of all those involved in the MIC Missionary Press have made it possible for our congregation to offer readers two high-quality magazines. *Le Précurseur* and *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News) have received awards for excellence on more than one occasion. Without a doubt, the faith and passion of these

consecrated women played a pivotal role in the publication's success.

A VIBRANT WITNESS TO CHANGE

What makes our magazines relevant and worthy to be among Canada's patrimonial works? To answer this question, our team has selected **a dozen articles from various issues published at different time periods** and made them available to interested readers. This modest sample of our expansive archive illustrates the impressive range of topics explored over the years.

When looking at previous issues, it is easy to see how *The Precursor* (MIC Mission News) has evolved, both in terms of content and form. Originally, a single issue was an imposing black and white volume filled with biblical and encyclical excerpts, quotes from saints, tributes to bishops, cardinals, and priests, not to mention innumerable excerpts from missionary diaries offering unprecedented access to the Sisters' lives.

As time passed, content became more diverse and computer graphics improved. Slowly but surely, the issues slimmed down, sacrificing quantity for quality. New perspectives on missionary life multiplied and colour print-

ing was introduced. Our goal was not only to inform subscribers, but also to expose them to different cultures. We tried many different tactics to compel our readers. For example, during the 60s and 70s, we tried to adopt a more educational, photojournalistic approach without diminishing the spiritual nature of our articles. Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council was a historic moment in the Catholic world and profoundly affected our writing. In issues published during the post-conciliar era, we notice a gradual abandonment of ornate clerical regalia and religious titles in favour of a more modest dress and a return to civil names.

As it entered the 21st century, the now well known *MIC Mission News* remained timely and continued to spread the Institute's spirit of thanksgiving. Certain social and political stances were taken as the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception permitted themselves to share their points of view and defend the rights and liberties of those facing injustices. As such, we must not forget to appreciate the important work of our secular freelancers, just as we appreciate our MIC writers.

Our publications are an invaluable treasure, one that immerses readers in a rich and dynamic history. While the scientific community might find it difficult to appraise our work with an objective lens, they cannot deny that our archive is a goldmine of factual and emotional data. Nevertheless, we must remember to put these historical moments in context to better understand their meaning and scope.

Through this interesting retrospective, we will show that, while the MIC Missionary Press adapted to the changing times, it never became a chaotic catch-all, or misrepresented its true purpose to sell copies and please audiences. Today, after so many decades, we still recognize its original missionary roots. In fact, many faithful readers "cannot get enough" of our writing and impatiently await our next issue.

STILL CHANGING IN THE 21st CENTURY

Ever since the establishment of the Institute and its Press, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have kept their hearts and minds open. They adapted without hesitation when faced with the needs of different populations and the introduction of new technologies. Time and again, they were on the front lines, putting all the tools available to them to good use.

Their endless resourcefulness helped solve many problems at the MIC Missionary Press. The Sisters had a lucid, clairvoyant-like awareness of their own limitations. Faced with the reality of their work and their advanced age, they reached out to many professionals in order to preserve the impressive collection of the magazines.

After long periods of reflection and years of preparation, the *Virtual Center of the MIC Historical Missionary Memory* was created in 2015. Every issue is now available on our bilingual website. Faced with the uncertain future of print media and the growing popularity of communication technologies, we took the leap and decided to go digital.

The Virtual Center exemplifies how timely the MIC Missionary Press continues to be, despite what some have said about our conservative and conventional character. Once again, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit (DéliaTétreault) helped us reach our destiny.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Messiah's precursor was ahead of his time. Today, the magazine that bears his name continues to break new ground. ✱

A Luminous Centenarian, on the Wings of Prayer

Dialogue with Sr. Réjane Gaudet, M.I.C.

SUZANNE BOIVIN



Réjane was born in Quebec City on January 21, 1916. The family then moved to Joliette, her father's hometown. Naturally drawn to contemplation, at the age of eight, Réjane was admiring the beauty of a magnificent landscape when suddenly she felt surrounded by a life-giving Light. This experience deeply touched her and

the certainty of God's existence was engraved in her heart. With joy, Réjane tells us that such an encounter with the Divine led her to consecrate her long life to Him.

In 1973, at a time when Sister Réjane was Superior at the Mother House in Montreal, the community decided to leave that large building located on Côte-Sainte-Catherine. When all the renting transactions were concluded, she accepted a new mandate: to be directress of the magazine *Le Précurseur*, thus becoming the 5th editor-in-chief.

REQUESTING A TEAM — MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Sister Réjane had directed many MIC houses, but had never directed a magazine. The challenges and doubts overwhelmed her. Though she had previously worked twelve years with approximately sixty MIC Sisters in promoting the magazine, and though she had visited numerous families across the province of Quebec, though she knew well the structure, the style and the readership of *Le Précurseur*, she knew that those experiences, though important, were not sufficient; more was needed to maintain 53,000 subscriptions.

As she began working as editor-in-chief, she typed the articles and decorated the pages. Sister Réjane relates: *At that time, we typed the texts on those old fashion typewriters. It took me a long time because I was not accustomed to this kind of work. The articles were artistically decorated by hand. What a nightmare, I had no artistic talent!*

Sister Réjane felt the urgent need of being supported by a qualified team. Shortly after, Sr. Florence L'Heureux, M.I.C. presented herself. She had received a training in secretarial work, she therefore graciously offered her services; typing was her strength - what a gift from Heaven! Then Sr. Isabelle Éthier, M.I.C. who was a great artist accepted to work on the design and layout of the magazine — what a relief that was!

CENTRALIZE TO BETTER SERVE

When Sister Réjane arrived, there already was an MIC community team working in the shipping room. Each magazine was addressed by hand, inserted in an envelope and stamped. Automation and subcontracting came later. *Le Précurseur* was printed in Ontario. Sister Réjane evaluated the service and then contacted *Librairie Beauchemin* located nearby in Quebec. Shortly after, the printing responsibility was passed on to the latter.

A CALL VIA LE PRÉCURSEUR

Le Précurseur had a significant impact on recruitment. *We would see it in many households when we visited families. The people knew about the magazine and would subscribe. The pastors, who met with the missionaries, would speak to their parishioners about this missionary magazine in the hope of awakening the missionary spirit in Quebec. All was in place and well organized to support the missions around the world.*

In 1978, Sister Réjane began having cardiac problems thus obliging her to quit *Le Précurseur*. Having reached her 100th year, she now consecrates her life to prayer and contemplation. She prays for the development and protection of the missions around the world, she prays for the refugees, particularly for the mothers and children. As directress and editor-in-chief of *Le Précurseur* and by her consecrated life, Sister Réjane Gaudet never ceased contributing to Venerable Délia Tétreault's dream. ✱

A Heart Open to the World

Dialogue with Sr. Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

SUZANNE BOIVIN



Sister Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C., led the active life she always dreamed of. She reached out to others using various communication tools in a rapidly changing world. Her commitment to the MIC Mission News began in the 1980s, when she first recognized the world's great need for the Word of God.

Sister Huguette Turcotte was born in Montreal in 1924. As a young girl she was struck with tuberculosis and then later with typhoid fever, and as she recovered she developed an appreciation for reading and writing. Touched by the articles in *Le Précurseur* (French version of the *MIC Mission News*), she tended a secret, passionate wish to go out and meet the world. Little did she know she would realize her dream: firstly, as a missionary and music teacher in the Philippines, then later as the secretary of the missions department of the Canadian Religious Conference, and finally, as the sixth directress of the MIC Missionary Press.

IN SERVICE: FROM BRUSSELS TO MONTREAL

In the fall of 1978, a then middle-aged Sister Huguette was working in Brussels as the assistant to the secretary general of the International Catholic Organization for Cinema and Audiovisual (OCIC). She worked hard to spread the Word of God through cinema in a spirit of thanksgiving inspired by the MIC Foundress, Mother Délia. Didn't Pope Pius X encourage the Sisters to *preach the Word of God from the rooftops* when he first sanctioned the establishment of the community in 1904?

Sister Huguette's time writing for the OCIC International Trilingual Bulletin and her university education trained her well for *Le Précurseur*. In 1978, the Superior General requested that she return to Quebec for an indefinite period to take over the publication.

Sister Huguette was an experienced organizer, and manned the helm of *Le Précurseur* with her team until the spring of 1983. The year the French magazine fell into her hands, Vietnamese refugees were fleeing their country to escape communism. When they arrived in Montreal, they were completely helpless. By night, Sister Huguette ran *Le Précurseur* (she slept on a couch in her office), and by day she scoured the city, gathering resources left and right for the newcomers.

Back in 1979, *Le Précurseur* was published every two months and widely distributed. Sustained by the Sisters' unwavering faith, the magazine eventually reached 48,940 subscribers. The MIC would leave in pairs for up to two months, traveling throughout Quebec, Ontario, and Massachusetts on subscription campaigns.

AN INSPIRATIONAL VIEW OF LE PRÉCURSEUR

To better communicate the Church's mission, Sister Huguette put her creativity to work and took up photography. *My Minolta camera was always hanging around my neck, she said. I captured everything in colour. I supplied both the OCIC publication in Brussels and Le Précurseur.* From then on, a colour photograph was showcased in every issue of the MIC magazine.

Thanks to our missionary Sisters abroad, said Sister Huguette, the magazine's content became rich and varied. The magazine also began to publish her accounts of meetings with missionaries from different communities and excerpts from world congress reports.

COMMUNICATING HER VISION TO THE FUTURE

Throughout the wave of social changes that rocked the 70s and 80s, *Le Précurseur* played a pivotal role in the development of the missionary spirit in Quebec. Even if our print publication will one day be exceeded, its pages of evangelization will continue to be as vibrant as they were during those first few years with Mother Délia. In 2020, we will be celebrating *Le Précurseur's* 100th birthday. Sister Huguette hopes to keep the magazine alive until then at the very least, and she continues to help out in many ways. During her travels around the world, she gave conferences on women, describing them as *great universal providers*.

"My womanly heart aches for those women and children currently living as refugees in Europe, she said. Let us hope that Le Précurseur's presence online will have an impact on these critical issues"

At the age of 92, after 65 years of dedication to the cause, Sister Huguette is happy and fulfilled, and her heart remains open to the world and the future. ✱

MIC MISSIONARY PRESS—PERSONNEL

For the past twelve years I've assisted the production of *Le Précurseur* in many different ways. Each task, from making photocopies to developing long-term strategies, demanded a certain level of expertise. Working for the MIC Missionary Press is a mission, one that has seen all of my strengths and limitations. If I wake up one morning on the wrong side of the bed, my bad mood instantly dissipates when I run into one, two, or sometimes three fellow Sisters who smile and offer me their loveliest greetings. The magazine's dynamic team consists of twenty or so people: volunteers, freelancers, and part-time employees, one big family where interpersonal relationships are a priority. Together, we put our hearts, experiences, energy, and deepest convictions into *Le Précurseur* so that we can offer our readers a beautiful, quality magazine filled with thought-provoking subjects. I'm so happy to work for the MIC Missionary Press and to fulfill this mission at this stage of my life.

CAROLE GUÉVIN

”

“ For the past four years I have been writing articles for *Le Précurseur*; I appreciate this enriching experience which feeds the mind as well as the heart. The MIC Missionary Press is not only committed to diversity but it also looks at the world with a unique perspective of our societies: a missionary and solidarity perspective. Seldom do we find platforms which promote intergenerational dialogue or even space to hear the voice of the youth. However, the magazine *Le Précurseur* is one of them. For me, when the editorial team comes together it is a joy to be able to dialogue and share with the members. I am always delighted to take part in the profound discussions which open up on a multitude of subjects—political, social, cultural as well as spiritual.

To write a page or two in this magazine is an opportunity for me to reflect, to delve within me, and break away from the daily routine. I am happy to participate in a magazine project and being part of a vibrant, inspiring team is certainly a privilege.

ÉMILIE ROSCANU



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (from left to right):
Perpétue Razafindrahaino, M.I.C., Treasurer;
François Bourret, President; Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.,
Administrator; Jacques Bouchard, Vice-president;
Carole Guévin, Assistant Directress;
Agathe Durand, M.I.C., Secretary

MEMBERS OF THE EDITORIAL TEAM (from left to right) –
1st row: Émilien Roscanu, Carole Guévin, Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.,
Audrey Charland; 2nd row: Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.,
André Gadbois, Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



My dearest sister... the Sister

My sister Thérèse was a bridge in my life. She was a scientist, and died young at the MIC infirmary in Pont-Viau. This was the day I left school – me, the “intellectual”! In 2005, I entered a world of tenderness, joy, trust, and surprising rigour: the world of writing. I joined the editorial team responsible for *Le Précurseur*. In this small heart oriented world, listening is a priority. Here, we discover beauty, contemplation, meditation, faith, democracy, bravery, talent. I believe the heart of the editorial team is a reflection of the entire MIC community.

For the past eleven years I’ve been resting here – relaxing, admiring my colleagues, laughing and praying, discovering paths that nurture my faith. I’ve worked alongside four happy and fulfilled women, and another man has recently joined us. Our team’s mission: *to sow joy and hope*. Thank you, my dear sister Thérèse, for this wonderful gift.

ANDRÉ GADBOIS



The joy of going forth

“ In his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis speaks to us about **A CHURCH WHICH GOES FORTH** (No. 20). My participation as a member of the editorial team allows me “to go forth” to set out with a desire to meet and know the other person. When we come together to brainstorm in order to find a theme for our next magazine issue, we take a look at the world around us that needs to be evangelized because our magazine is first and foremost a missionary magazine. Spontaneously, suggestions are proposed by each participant and, to our surprise, we marvel by the way the Spirit enlightens us with ideas and leads us to see the great needs of our society. With joy, we choose a theme that best fits the world’s MISSION realities and challenges. Every time we come together as a team, I feel I am reaching out; I am motivated in finding a person who willingly would accept to write a slice of life experience. Commentaries we receive after these articles are published confirm that a positive effect is left in the hearts of more people than we think. A gift greatly appreciated.

LÉONIE THERRIEN, M.I.C.

MIC MISSIONARY PRESS PERSONNEL (from left to right) –
1st row: Srs Marcelle Paquet, Nicole Joly, Yolaine Lavoie,
Anita Perron, Michelle Paquette; 2nd row: Srs Lucette Gilbert,
Elmire Allary, Suzanne Labelle, Monique Bigras, Bernadette
Deguire, Yvonne Ayotte, Lucy Virginia Hung



Working for our subscribers has always been for me a source of joy and thanksgiving. I communicate with them every day. I help them renew their subscriptions and make sure they receive their magazine at the correct address. I'm always impressed by the prayer requests written behind the subscription coupon. Many take the opportunity to express their appreciation, and their words of encouragement help the editorial team continue their good work.

In the evenings, when I join my community group for prayer, I think about our subscribers' good intentions so that we might share them with the Lord together. I was deeply touched when a 95-year-old woman wrote to us, saying that although she could not read anymore, she continued to subscribe. She enjoyed looking at the magazine's

photographs and prayed for our missions. These small gestures give me the strength to continue my work. Our goal is to *sow joy and hope*: a wonderful mission nourished by our contacts with our subscribers and others we meet along the way.

I am not alone in my service. Colleagues answer the telephone, take care of correspondence, and distribute the magazines abroad. Others travel and organize missionary promotion events in various parishes: truly a beehive of activity to sow the word of God.

YOLAINE LAVOIE, M.I.C.

”

LE PRÉCURSEUR, 1920, page 1

As the English version of *Le Précurseur* began in 1923,
this first French "bulletin" was not published.

050
M.I.C.

BULLETIN

DES

Soeurs Missionnaires de L'Immaculée-Conception

Vol. 1

OUTREMONT, MAI 1920

No 1

NOTRE BULLETIN

Depuis plusieurs années déjà, les bienfaiteurs et amis de nos missions nous demandaient un périodique donnant les nouvelles de notre Société qui travaille, en pays idolâtre, à une petite partie de la vigne du Seigneur. A cette bienveillante requête, nous ne pouvions malheureusement répondre, les ressources manquant pour assurer l'existence d'une revue de ce genre.

Si, aujourd'hui, nous osons entreprendre semblable travail, ce n'est pas que nous soyons en meilleures conditions de le faire : c'est que nous y sommes fortement encouragés par notre vénéré archevêque, Monseigneur Bruchési, et par Son Excellence le Visiteur Apostolique de la Chine, Monseigneur de Guébriant, évêque de Canton. Un motif plus puissant encore nous y incite : dans ses audiences et dans sa correspondance privée et publique, le Souverain Pontife insiste plus que jamais sur la nécessité de promouvoir, par tous les moyens possibles, l'œuvre des missions. Il ne cesse d'encourager les pasteurs et les fidèles, et Sa Paternité compte que de notre généreuse Amérique viendra le secours qui sauvera les missions en détresse.

Quand ces modestes pages ne seraient publiées que dans le but de répondre au désir de notre bien-aimé Pontife et de nos Pasteurs, elles auraient leur raison d'être. A ce premier but vient se joindre celui, non moins légitime, d'apporter à nos bienfaiteurs quelques consolations en leur faisant connaître les fruits de leur générosité.

Les personnes charitables que la divine Providence a, dans le passé, placées sur la route des humbles missionnaires de l'Immaculée-Conception ont toujours, et nous le disons avec reconnaissance, répondu avec un empressement digne de leur esprit de foi aux sollicitations que nous leurs avons adressées. C'est grâce à elles que ce premier numéro de nos Annales paraît au jour.

Mais pour assurer l'avenir de ce bulletin, il faut de nombreux abonnés. A notre Imma-

culée Mère et Patronne, nous demandons, en ce mois qui lui est consacré, de susciter, de partout, des zélateurs et zélatrices apôtres, voyant dans le nombre toujours croissant des lecteurs un nombre croissant d'amis de la belle cause des missions.

La revue paraîtra quatre fois par année et le prix d'abonnement en est de un dollar. Sa toilette est modeste, sa littérature bien simple : c'est celle du cœur. Elle sera bien accueillie, nous osons l'espérer, de tous ceux qui s'intéressent aux progrès de l'Évangile dans les pays infidèles.

Procurer un abonnement nouveau, c'est aider les missionnaires, c'est avancer l'œuvre du Seigneur au champ de la moisson.

LETTRE APOSTOLIQUE

DE

NOTRE SAINT PÈRE LE PAPE

BENOÎT XV

SUR LES MISSIONS

Le 30 novembre dernier, S. S. Benoît XV a publié sur les Missions une Lettre Apostolique qui, comme le dit la *Croix* de Paris, est un des documents les plus importants qu'ait écrits un Pontife.

Les deux premières parties s'adressent aux évêques et aux missionnaires : le Chef de l'Église leur trace les règles nouvelles qui doivent inspirer et diriger leur apostolat dans les pays infidèles, à l'heure où la carte du globe subit de grandes transformations et où le monde se réorganise.

Nous recommandons à l'attention de nos lecteurs la troisième partie de ce document pontifical, où sont indiqués les devoirs des fidèles envers les Missions.

* * *

Nous désirons enfin Nous adresser à l'ensemble des fidèles, à tous ceux que la divine miséricorde a enrichis du don ineffable de la vraie foi et mis en possession des bienfaits sans

THE PRECURSOR, 1963, page 575



AN AFRICAN SOCIETY, *THE* ROSARIAN SISTERS

In his encyclical *Rerum ecclesiae* Pope Pius XI gives the following advice to missionaries, "Since for the organization of the Church in your regions, it is necessary, that you make use of the elements from which by Divine Providence it is composed, you ought, as a consequence, to consider as one of the principal duties of your office, the founding of native religious communities of both men and women."

Bold project

No sooner was the territory of Nyasaland's Northern province raised to the status of an Apostolic Prefecture (May 1947) than its spiritual head, Msgr. Marcel Saint Denis, W.F., gave his attention to the training of the indigenous clergy and to the establishment of a local

575

MIC MISSION NEWS, Winter 2009, pages 16-17

ON THE MOVE WITH CHINA

ALREADY
ONE HUNDRED YEARS!

2009: Centennial of the Mission of Canton, China. The adventure of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in China goes back to April 1908. The Community then counts only fifteen members. Together, they begin a novena asking for a sign that would reveal where the first mission abroad is calling them. Half way through the novena the Apostolic Prefect of Canton, Msgr. Jean-Marie Mérel, priest of the Foreign Missions in Paris, comes to the Mother House in Outremont—he has a request.

They left for
a lifetime!
The trip lasted
weeks...

¹Embroidery workshop
²Street ministry
Photos credit: MIC Archives
³A modern day class
Photo credit:
M. P. Sanfagon, M.I.C.

By Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1909

The Archbishop of Montreal, Msgr. Paul Bruchési and the Foundress, Mother Marie of the Holy Spirit (Délia Tétreault) mull over the request of Msgr. Mérel. There is a need in Canton: A French Community, Catechists of Marie-Immaculée have to leave their mission work due to lack of personnel. The challenge is enormous, the work is multiple: school, nursery, orphanage, refuge, dispensary. Having faith in Providence, the decision is taken; China will be our first mission. Six young professed Sisters are assigned to Canton. Their departure takes place at the Cathedral in Montreal, on September 8, 1909. In his farewell address, in the presence of more than one thousand faithful who are attending the ceremony, Msgr. Bruchési stresses: *It is the first time that Canada witnesses a departure of missionaries who are from a national Institute and whose exclusive goal is: missions abroad.*

Departures for China succeed one after the other; the main mission of Canton

grows in personnel and works. In 1913, the Foundress agrees to send four Sisters at the leprosarium in Shek Lung, an island close to Canton where there are hundreds of victims of the disease. They will stay in service until they are expelled in 1952.

IN MANCHURIA

Out of the willingness of the Quebec bishops, who want to participate in the great missionary movement of the Church, the Société des Missions Étrangères originates in 1921. Six years later, these priests invite the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to join them in Manchuria, north-east of China, where the Société has recently established its first mission posts. The MIC Sisters accept; they spread out and open dispensaries throughout the vast territory. At Szepingkai, they become responsible for the training of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, a community of religious Chinese women, founded by Msgr. L.-A. Lapierre, P.M.É. In 1947, the political situation forces them to leave: they are fifty MICs working in eight localities. However, dif-

FOCUS



Seventeen Sisters and were interred and. A few valiant lived in China, reside with us in s of Chinese ori- ar common mis- e Good News of Christ to those t.

ND CHINA IN 2009

2009, highlights dth anniversary C departure for h rapid air travel of communicat- to imagine what embark on a long The young mis- oic! And they left trip lasted weeks, ily members and ouse took months destination. Also, being uprooted, ers and difficulties ved through it all! is an opportunity ae heroic choices nd to keep in our ave done, a great d for our Chinese s.

hen Without Frontiers: A Sisters of the Immaculate Montreal. Les Éditions Carte

in his Diocese. Four missionaries until 1980 was she able to return to Blanche, 2008.

MIC Mission News | WINTER 2009 | 17

Missionary Workrooms and Lay Collaboration

Hélène De Serres, M.I.C.

Délia Tétreault, from the beginning, tried to obtain the participation of the laity in her work. Small indeed was the community when the first bases of this cooperation were laid down which in time knew a wonderful growth.

Today, most of the M.I.C. workrooms are a thing of the past; however, in the hearts of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception the desire to maintain a missionary spirit through the collaboration of the laity with the M.I.C. Sisters is always alive and promising.

First Steps and Successive Boosts

On November 20, 1905, just three months after the vows of the first two recruits, Paul Bruchési, Bishop of Montreal, presides over the first meeting of a lay association placed under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier, patron of Catholic missions. "The goal of this association is to help develop the works of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Montreal by all possible means: prayers, alms, etc.," quotes a leaflet written by the devoted Pastor himself.

The Foundress is not asking only for a helping hand from the kind friends who answer the call but offers them participation in the works and prayers of the members of the Institute: she invites them to an exchange, a communion, a sharing of the missionary spirit that fills her life and which she would like to share with her compatriots. During the meetings, talks are given on the missions, on the evangelization

work to be accomplished throughout the world. Then the laity and the nuns end their meeting with prayers in the chapel.

As early as 1907, the auxiliaries decide to use their meetings to sew for the benefit of the missions of Africa about which they have been informed by Father A.M. Daignault, S.J. This is also the style to be adopted by future knitting groups.

Those who once committed themselves to projects of charity, apostolate or Christian action, know that it is not always easy, and that it demands faith and hope at times. Needless to say that the pioneers of the workrooms have experienced success and disappointment alternately.

In 1914, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit wishes to revitalize this movement. The first meeting of the renewed association is held on April 2nd. The minutes



THE PRECURSOR, 1977, No. 2 - pages 7-8



At the center is Mrs. Arthur Berthiaume, first President of the "Auxiliary Ladies of the M.I.C."

of the meeting recall the speech full of faith, charity and apostolic zeal of Father Louis Lalande, S.J. He comments on the rules of the new foundation whose members bear the name of "Auxiliary Ladies of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception", and who adopt the following motto: "For the greater glory of God, always more and always better". The new statutes mention not only participation but affiliation. They stipulate that the Auxiliaries are considered by the Sisters as their affiliates, missionaries at home, lay apostles, sisters, honorary members of the Institute.

Among the means suggested to these devoted collaborators to help the missionaries and their works, Father Lalande stresses particularly the necessity to go beyond the simple gift of their time and money, and to make use of their social influence in order to interest others in the missions.

In April 1914, Mrs. Arthur Berthiaume is elected president of the new association, the chairmanship which she will fulfill devotedly for more than fifty years.

Nine years later, as the movement is dying, the Foundress gives it a new push. The bishops have founded the Canadian Seminary for the Foreign Missions and the dear Mother who has prayed and worked so hard for this project wishes that volunteer seamstresses work for the benefit of this foundation. She encourages these so well that the work of 1923 makes a wonderful exhibition of articles and linen

8

intended for the chapel and the Seminary of Pont Viau. However, as everyone else then, the faithful providers ignore the particular reasons which urge Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit to promote this new institution; they admire her unselfishness but find it too absolute, and some of them ask to resume the work for the benefit of our Congregation. It is now time to help our novitiate of Pont Viau which is under construction.

Through the years, the opening of our houses in Quebec, Joliette, Rimouski, Nominungue, Three-Rivers, Saint Jean (Iberville), Chicoutimi, Vancouver, Marlboro (Mass.) has given rise to the successive organization of workrooms, rightfully called 'charity workshops' and 'groups of missionary cooperation'. Some have been formed even in places where the Institute did not have establishments. Ladies, young men and women, even students are united in this manner to support the missionary apostolate.

In addition to these collective efforts, one has to mention the hidden efforts of the numerous collaborators who worked at home. The *Precursor* of 1937, mentions a lady of Three-Rivers, making at home, herself or with the help of some friends, more than 400 articles.

Yes, the tiny seed sown on November 20, 1905 has grown to a full tree!

MIC MISSION NEWS, Jan.-Feb. 1993, pages 12-14

How do the Zambians face suffering, death and misfortunes of all kinds?

The Zambians are profoundly religious and they often see suffering as coming from the hands of the Almighty. However, when someone falls sick or dies, a witch-doctor might be consulted to find out who has bewitched the patient and is thus responsible for the said ailment or death. As regards the numerous trials which are part of daily life, the Zambians easily see them as an expression of God's will.

Thank you very much, Sr. Jacqueline, for this portrait of the Zambians you have sketched for me. I appreciate knowing more about them. Thank you especially for sharing with me their riches - their deep sense of family values, their attitude towards worldly goods, their faith in God. *

CANADA-CHINA

**A 'martyrdom'
that might have been!**

Mission implies risks and apostolic joys. On the occasion of her 60th jubilee of religious life, Sr. Diana Chaîné relates an unforgettable incident of her missionary life in China.



Szeping kai, China 1947

On the night of June 16, we were to be put to death... For a third time (2 other previous attempts having failed), communists decided to do away with all the Canadian missionaries interned at the residence of the Clercs St-Viateur. Mgr Lapierre, the PME priests (Missions-Étrangères), the Clercs St-Viateur and we, the M.I.C. Sisters, were destined to be the next victims. The communists intended to get rid of us that very night. We Sisters resided on the first floor of the school. Although the windows were well blocked with sand bags, pieces of shrapnel reached us. The men were well secure in the cellar with the nationalist commander and many of his soldiers.

Much later, at a gathering in Montreal, a Clerc St-Viateur who was alluding to this time of war, said to me: "We regretted having left you on the first floor during this upheaval since you

were more exposed to the danger." At that time it was understood that the Sisters were to occupy quarters separated from the rest of the group in the building.

From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. cannons and machine guns attacked the Catholic mission and the Cathedral. In the midst of this fierce exchange of gunshots, we were far from secure and jumped at the slightest explosion of shrapnel thinking we had been attacked.

Our death being imminent, we prepared ourselves in prayer. When receiving the sacrament of reconciliation, the priest told me: "Tomorrow, you will be in heaven!" What consoling words! I rejoiced! Tomorrow in heaven! The greatest sacrifices had been made when I parted with my dear family and left my country forever. I renewed my offering by accepting to end my ministry among the Christians and catechumens in Szeping kai.



At left, missionaries in front of a building in Szeping kai after the bombing.

A jubilee celebration! Sr. Diana (center) with her elder sister, Germaine Desharnais and Sr. Colette Dufour, m.i.c.

to leave Szeping kai and for Shanghai. We were packed together in a truck used for transporting animals. On the night, the truck broke down. We were out in the open, the communist guards keeping

Mgr Schetagne, p.m.é., later introduced us to the Sisters of Sacred-Heart: "Sisters, I would like you to meet these Sisters!" With great kindness welcomed us and provided with all we needed. These Sisters gave us strength and courage.

My mission fields

After being expelled from Manchuria, we spent three months in Tsung-tung where I received an appointment for the Philippines. My first departure was in 1932 for Japan, my second, for Manila in 1933 and the third, for the Philippines in 1947. I thoroughly enjoyed these three countries, each of which has its own particular beauty and charm.

After having returned to Canada in 1950, my ministry goes on in St-Jur-sur-Richelieu. I am involved with prayer groups at the Logis, Villa St-Jean, and in Renewal and parish committees.

I am grateful thanks to the Lord for the gift of health which enables me to remain ever active in Service! *

Diana Chainé, m.i.c.



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for a deeper understanding
of the faith serving all of the
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