

MIC MISSION NEWS

To sow seeds of joy and hope

VOL. 44, N° 1 | JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH 2017 | \$5.00



SINCE 1923

CANADA

DEAR
MONTREAL,
IT'S YOUR
TURN

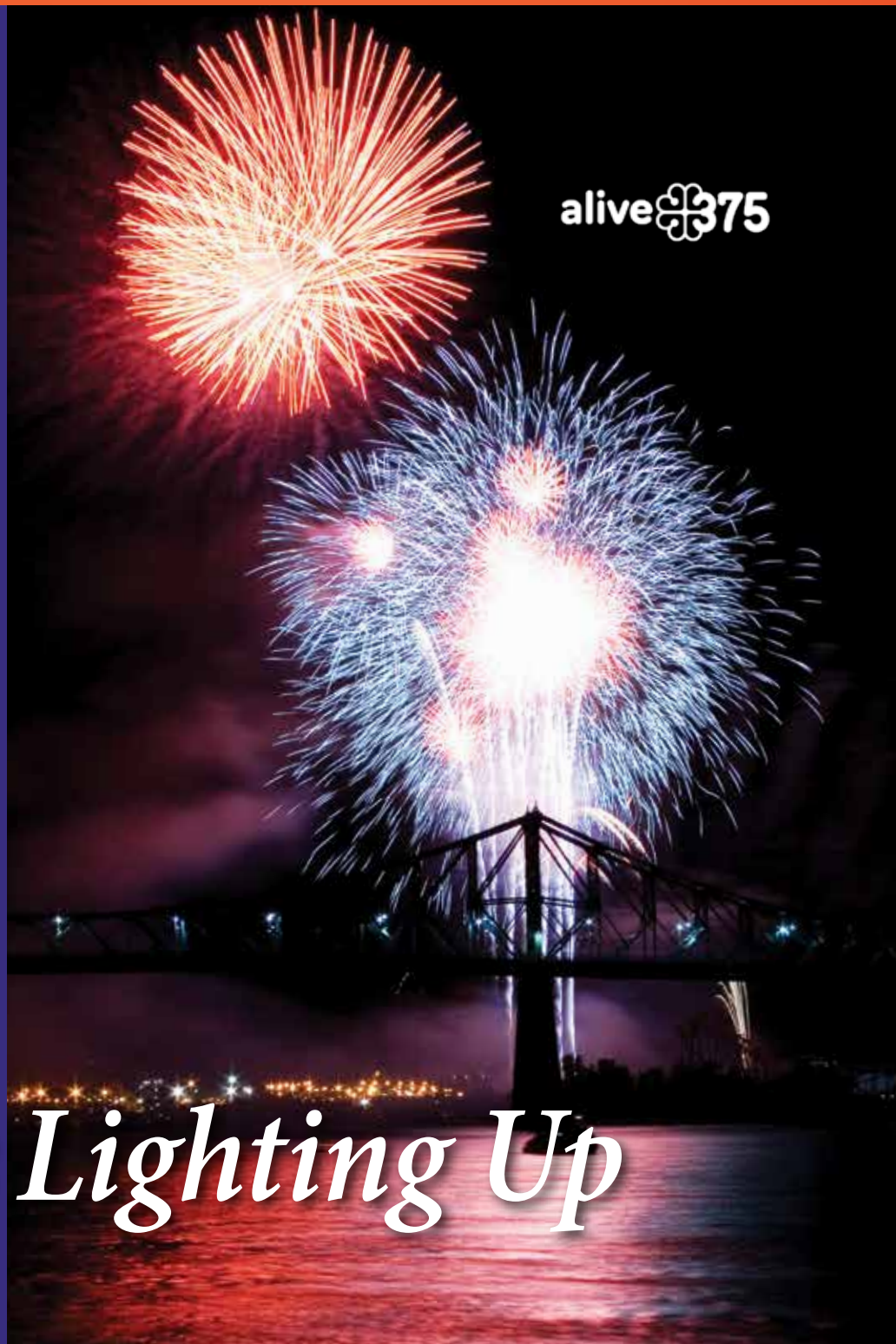
HAITI

ON THE TRAIL
OF DÉLIA

IN FOCUS

Bridges Lighting Up

alive  375



MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2017

JANUARY

Christian Unity – That all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and fraternal charity to restore ecclesial communion and by collaborating to meet the challenges facing humanity.

FEBRUARY

Comfort for the Afflicted – That all those who are afflicted, especially the poor, refugees, and marginalized, may find welcome and comfort in our communities.

MARCH

Support for Persecuted Christians – That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.

.....

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**



CONTENTS

VOL. 44, N° 1 | JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH 2017

COLUMNS

SPIRITUAL LIFE

4 A Bridge Called Jesus — *André Gadbois*

CULTURES AND MISSION

6 The MIC International Scholasticate — *Audrey Charland*

YOUTH

8 Dear Montreal, It's Your Turn — *Émilien Roscanu*

POEM

10 Montreal — *Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.*

IN FOCUS

BRIDGES LIGHTING UP

11 Alley of Peace — *Suzanne Boivin*

14 At the Heart of Papua — *Grégoire Viau*

16 Marriage – The Visible Sign of a Creative Love
— *Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.*

ABOUT THE MICs

18 On the Trail of Délia — *Carmènetta Beauplan, M.I.C.*

20 Come and See — *Ravaka Andréa Razafindahy, M.I.C.*

MIC Mission News

*Mission magazine published
by the Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception*

Offices

Missionary Press MIC
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval (QC) Canada H7G 1A4

Phone: (450) 663-6460

Fax: (450) 972-1512

E-mail: micmissionnews@pressemic.org

Web site: www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

Directress of Publication

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Carole Guévin, Assistant

Editors

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
André Gadbois

Editorial Team

Audrey Charland
Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.
André Gadbois
Émilien Roscanu
Suzanne Boivin

Translation

Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
Megan Callahan

In Collaboration

Linda Anderson, PhD
Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

Promotion

Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.

Circulation

Yolaine Lavoie, M.I.C.
Michelle Paquette, M.I.C.
Lucy Virginia Hung, M.I.C.

Accounting

Elmire Allary, M.I.C.

Layout & Design

Caron Communications

Printing

Solisco

Cover

Jacques-Cartier Bridge

Photo Credit:

Paul-André Belle-Isle

Subscription rates (4 issues)

Canada: 1 year – \$15 / 2 years – \$25

U.S.A: 1 year – US\$20

International: 1 year – C\$30

Single issue: \$5 (plus mailing costs)

Tax Receipt

Registration Number:
NE 89346 9585 RR0001
Presse missionnaire MIC

Legal Deposits

Bibliothèque nationale
du Québec – National Library
of Canada – ISSN 0315-9655

*Member of the Catholic &
Ecumenical Media Association*

We acknowledge the financial
support of the Government of Canada
Periodical Fund of the Department of
Canadian Heritage.

Canada

Your Light will Shine

Imagine a bridge covered in lights! To commemorate Montreal's 375th birthday, the city will be undertaking this lavish project. The beautiful bridge will light up the city. Everyone will celebrate!

Our city and our world are becoming more and more cosmopolitan as migration flows increase. It takes real courage to leave behind your home in search of a better life. Imagine fleeing your country in desperation because of political turmoil or war. In honour of Montreal's 375th birthday, let us welcome new arrivals and build bridges to unite our different cultures. Let us greet them with lights of openness, understanding, and friendship, so that everyone who sees them shining will say: *You are my neighbor! You are my city! You are my country!* New arrivals will be grateful for our spontaneous acceptance and welcoming heart.

Délia Tétreault once dreamed of a world without borders. This is our fundamental mission: to *be one* (Jn 17:21), to build bridges between communities, but especially between human beings and their Creator. Isn't God our father? Aren't we all sisters and brothers?

This year also marks the centennial of the Pontifical Missionary Works (OPM). On this occasion, Pope Francis asked that all baptized individuals nurture their evangelical passion and share their Christian faith by performing small, daily gestures. Collaborating on shared projects, like the beautification of an alley, new relationships can take root and blossom. Every day, we are faced with so many opportunities to spread happiness. Do you remember Expo 67?¹ Fifty years ago, the project allowed Quebecers to discover different cultures and new technologies. MAN AND HIS WORLD pavilions were so admired! Expo 67 had a welcoming and creative spirit. Not only did it make the city even more beautiful, it opened us up to new discoveries.

What a wonderful mission to celebrate Montreal's 375th birthday: building bridges lit by the love we offer our neighbour, whoever they may be. The present issue would like to convey this message: let us open our arms and our hearts to others; our light will shine for all.

Marie-Paule Sanjean, m.i.c.

¹ Expo 67, the "Universal and International Exhibition," was the highlight of Canada's Centennial celebrations in 1967.

BRIDGES FREE FROM WEAR

When she met obstacles or inevitable difficulties in life, Mother Délia always proposed means — such as bridges — to surmount the obstacles, conquer the difficulties.

You want nothing else but to do the Will of God. I reassure you that as long as you have this disposition, no matter what obstacle you will meet, you will triumph over all. (March 12, 1918)

Firmly hold the Virgin Mary's hand: this good Mother will help us through all difficulties. (January 11, 1922)

It is said: *Strength lies in unity*, it is true. If we are one, we will triumph over all difficulties. (October 29, 1925)

I say to you: *God knows all, He sees all, He does all and He loves you!* Remember these words, repeat them often, they will help you go through all the difficulties of life. You will experience peace and joy. (December 12, 1929)

When we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, we will conquer all obstacles even if they seem invincible. (June 12, 1931)

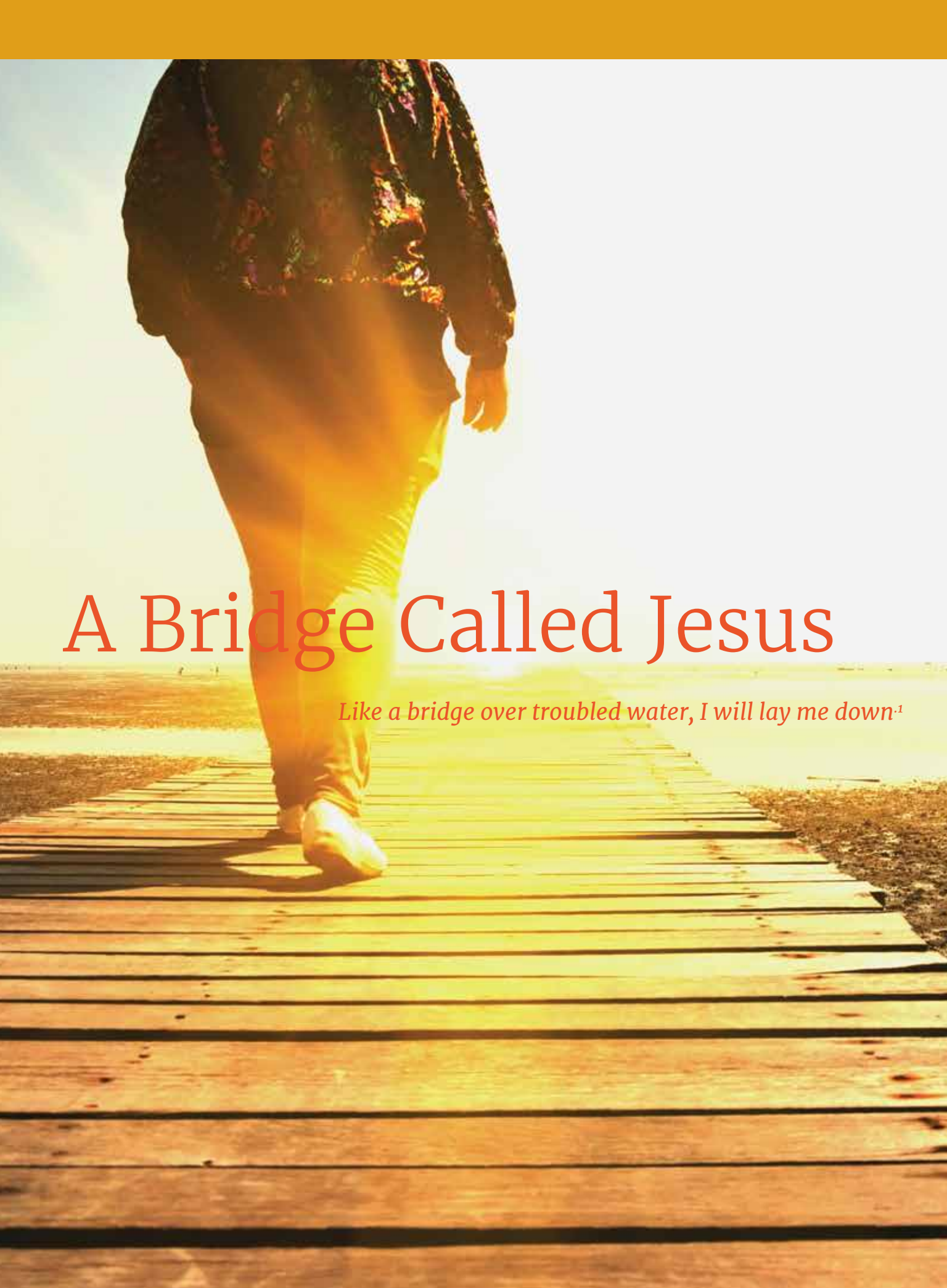
Difficulties of all kinds are not lacking and only prayer will help us overcome them. (February 27, 1932)

Those poor people who have families to feed and have only their work... we must pray for them and ask God to give them the courage and strength to go through their difficulties. (March 9, 1933)

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

Cause Délia-Tétreault
100 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval, QC — Canada H7G 1A4

E-mail:
causedtetreault@gmail.com

A person is walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk that stretches towards a bright sunset over a body of water. The person is wearing a dark, patterned jacket and light-colored pants. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light from the low sun, creating a long shadow of the person on the boardwalk. The water is visible in the distance, and the sky is a pale yellow. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

A Bridge Called Jesus

Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down¹



By André Gadbois

Bridges are very much in the news today. Unfortunately, they are often elaborate, expensive, and not always practical. Despite their grandeur, they are often closed for repair and thus mocked by the media. Cities call them *signature bridges* and drivers fume about the perpetual traffic and congestion. But there are also quaint bridges in small villages. Every day local residents cross these humble bridges, and every so often they rebuild and solidify them. I remember the bridges we built during Camp Scouts. Back then farmers were happy to lend us their land for fifteen days of happiness. What is a bridge? It's a structure that helps you clear an obstacle in your path so that you can reach the distant shore. A bridge is a simple servant.

Jesus was a humble and faithful servant. He allowed the people of his country to go beyond their pain and solitude, their distress and discouragement. He was *a bridge over troubled waters* so that neighbours and *strangers* alike might see their star shine brightly. He wandered along his homeland's dusty roads and dared to build bridges to join not only lonely individuals, but also different communities. He cleared the way leading to his Father. He was festive and nurtured hope, a feeling too often discouraged. He spread the Good News. He also made sure that his kind gestures were passed on to avoid disappointment; He encouraged his disciples to: *Feed the people! Be creative! Share!* It's important to be involved!

THE LORD BECAME A BRIDGE TO REACH US

I can hear Paul Simon singing those wonderful words: *When you're weary, feeling small, when tears are in your eyes, I will dry them all; I'm on your side when times*

*get rough, and friends just can't be found, like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down.*² When I hear that song, I imagine the Lord of the universe at my side, helping me see the shining star hidden behind dark clouds, helping us overcome discouraging obstacles together: *I will comfort you. I'll take your part.*³ The Lord became a bridge to reach his children; he invited his disciples to do as he did, so that no one would be forgotten in the dark: *Do this in memory of me.*

¹ Song: Simon & Garfunkel
– composed by singer and
songwriter: Paul Simon
²⁻³⁻⁴ Ibid

PHOTO:
Shutterstock

See the shining star hidden behind dark clouds.

I hear and savour Paul Simon's words and I ask myself: as Catholic Christians, what kind of bridges are we building over our own troubled water? Are we aware of the real obstacles our sisters and brothers must face before reaching the distant shore, the shore of happiness? Are we sensitive to their daily hardships? Do we see their tears and pain, their powerlessness and solitude transforming their days into nights? Can they look to us to be their bridge over troubled water? Can they build with us? What are our materials: compassion, humility, bravery, mercy, reflection, resistance, and generosity, unity, simplicity, creativity, solidarity, and faith?

*Sail on, silver girl. Your time has come to shine. All your dreams are on their way. See how they shine. If you need a friend, I'm sailing right behind.*⁴ Jesus promised that he would be with us until the end of time. In his own way, Paul Simon has expressed what Christians must strive for every day: to remain with their sisters and brothers, and become bridges over troubled water. This is a joyous way of living, because obstacles are cleared: the bridge overcomes troubled water. ☞

The MIC International Scholasticate

I smiled when I saw Sister Isabel in the doorway. The building has no working doorbell, and I had called just minutes before to let her know I was coming. A few technical issues still need to be resolved before the scholastics can feel comfortable in their new home adjacent to the Foreign Missions Seminary. Nonetheless, I was welcomed warmly. Despite their busy schedule at the International Scholasticate, Sister Isabel, Sister Nicole, and Sister Aida were kind enough to meet with me to satisfy my curiosity.



By Audrey Charland

WHEN THE DICTIONARY DOESN'T SUFFICE

What is a scholasticate? My dictionary search proved fruitless. However, the Catholic religious orders define *scholasticate* as the period of time between a Sister's temporary vows and her perpetual vows. The *MIC International Scholasticate* is nine months long and takes place in the Foundress' country. The scholastics must complete this final stage of the MIC religious formation before their definitive commitment.¹ These months are almost exclusively dedicated to in-depth reflection and meditation. Afterwards, the Sisters must decide if they are ready to take their perpetual vows.

The *International Scholasticate* program offers different workshops. Some focus on the spirituality of the congregation, while others involve prayer time and social activities (ex: Sisters talk about transitioning from their home country to their host country), all in a spirit of openness to universality. These activities are imbued with the spirit of the Foundress, Mother Délia, and allow the scholastics to take a step back, gain perspective, and see their experiences in a new light. A limited amount of time is dedicated to community involvement, depending on the scholastics' schedules.

FRAGMENTS OF THE PAST

The phrase *International Scholasticate* also refers to the physical space where the program takes place. Before it was successfully implemented in Canada, the missionaries attempted to bring the program to Asia on two separate occasions: once

in the late 70s, and then again in the 80s. Afterwards, the Scholasticate residency was moved to Longueuil, QC – Canada; some years later it was transferred to Montreal, QC in a building on Maplewood Avenue (Outremont). In July 2016, it finally settled near the convent in Pont-Viau, Laval, QC. The Institute believed that the final, crucial step of religious formation should take place somewhere closely connected to the Foundress' home country.

In 1990, the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* not only decided on the location of the International Scholasticate but also implemented its new orientation. The goal of the program was to foster relationships between the Sisters-to-be in a multicultural environment. Many of the candidates' home countries do not have the same level of diversity as Canada. The inter-cultural relationships forged during the early stages of the Sisters' vocation are not only enriching but are considered an asset for their future involvement in the Institute's general assemblies.

The *International Scholasticate* has changed significantly over the years. According to Sister Aida and Sister Nicole, at the beginning, the program was very intense and focused on pastoral care. Back then, in addition to their scholastic formation, candidates had various tasks and responsibilities (teaching, pastoral animation, etc.). For many, these first experiences *ad extra* were new and rewarding, but the program had a much less rigorous framework. As time went by, the program evolved and was adapted to the changes that took place within the congregation and the society at large.

DISCREET COMPANIONS

Today, the *Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception* who are directing the program focus on teaching their candidates how to listen, empathize, and encourage talent. Their multicultural team places great value on sharing experiences and strives to facilitate harmonious relationships. For this reason, the program must be adapted regularly

to accommodate the needs of each group, which change from year to year.

Consequently, the instructors do not have an easy task. Living in harmony is sometimes very difficult to accomplish, as each one has her own temperament and life experiences. Creating unity despite these differences is the very first challenge instructors are confronted with. At the individual level, they need to create the right conditions for the scholastics to open up, both mentally and spiritually. It's difficult to accompany someone who is introverted or closed in on herself. Another kind of distancing is the use of new technologies. These young women, living thousands of miles from their families, nonetheless manage to stay in contact with their loved ones. It is a far cry from the time when Sisters left home forever, to live in countries they knew nothing about. Understanding, flexibility, and tolerance have become essential tools to help us navigate a situation that did not exist a quarter-century ago.

There is one final challenge the formation team continues to face, one that we cannot deny, but is often brushed to the side: DOUBT. Generally, questions rise to the surface well before a scholastic moves to Canada. Doubt does not appear overnight, without a reason. In such situations, a companion is solicited to listen to the scholastic and support her on the path to happiness. A scholastic can also seek guidance outside the religious community (for example, by consulting a psychologist).

Once again, the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* have managed to establish a well-structured program relevant to our time, but also adapted to each individual's needs. In the spirit of Mother Délia, the final stage of the *MIC Scholasticate* provides respite and offers each candidate the chance to look back on her experiences and reflect on what lies ahead. Despite the decreasing number of new vocations, the quality of the religious missionary formation remains a priority. ☺

¹ Some scholastics travel to Quebec earlier to learn French.

PHOTOS:

¹ Scholastics and accompanying adults at a formation session

² The joy of picking apples

Photos Credit: MIC



DEAR MONTREAL, IT'S YOUR TURN



By Émilien Roscanu

Let me tell you about my city.

My city is 375 summers young and remembers just as many winters. It is barely a dot on the great history map of humanity, and yet its own history and culture rival those of the world's megacities. Like Paris, Montreal is a place of celebration.

Even though Montreal is only a few centuries old, it has a vibrant past and countless stories to tell. The city's heritage is colossal: after 375 years, the voices of its French sons and daughters still resonate. The founders of Ville-Marie: Jeanne-Mance, Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Maisonneuve have left their indelible mark. Montreal is an intelligent and modern metropolis. The many universities and hospitals are a testament to the city's well-established culture of knowledge; solidarity and mutual assistance are values deeply rooted in its DNA. Whether it was during the ice storm of 1998, or more recently, during the arrival

of Syrian refugees, Montreal has shown itself to be more than a simple city. It is a welcoming and supportive community, where individuals help their neighbours without hesitation.

MONTREAL, A SAFE HAVEN

Montreal is a veritable cultural metropolis, one that celebrates its diversity and the French fact in North America. Over time, Quebec's largest city has become truly cosmopolitan, drawing people from various cultures, forming a rich and diverse population. After being known as the city of a hundred steeples, we could say that Montreal became the city of a hundred cultures, each one intersecting and intertwining, to the benefit of everyone.

The island of Montreal is a quilt of cultures, each square held together by the willingness of citizens from different communities to live together amicably in a spirit of sharing. These individuals build veritable bridges of communion and exchange, allowing different communities to grow in harmony.

Who would have thought that this little island on the Saint-Lawrence River would become my grandparents' safe haven, a place where they could start anew? After fleeing from a country ruled by a dictator, they chose to settle in this urban area to raise their children and grandchildren. The warm welcome they received upon arrival

convinced them to stay. Tens of thousands of individuals have had similar experiences and have chosen to begin their new life in Montreal.

My parents adopted this place in the hope that one day, they might feel like they belong. Two generations later, their children and grandchildren call this city home. Safe haven, city of peace and prosperity, Montreal is truly the capital of possibilities.

BRIDGES OF PEACE

In previous issues, I have often expressed my belief that the biggest challenge of our time is learning to live together. In my city, you will find cultural diversity, but also significant socio-economic and generational disparities. When we talk about building bridges, we must also consider the gap between the rich and the poor, the young and the old. Our self-imposed barriers must give way to communication and exchange between citizens.

The city we live in is far from perfect. There are various issues: poverty, social exclusion, systemic racism, and gentrification, to name only a few. While these complex issues cannot be solved overnight, they need to be considered in our day-to-day lives. The borders separating Hochelaga from Rosemont, the Plateau from the Mile End, Little Burgundy from Griffintown, are nothing more than geographical and administrative limits. Border crossings and cultural exchanges should be encouraged, either through small community organizations or large-scale projects.

The old adage of strength through unity takes on new meaning when we pull down the imaginary boundaries that separate us. Building bridges takes time and energy, but the results are worth it. Bridges between communities can last an eternity.

STURDY BRIDGES FOR THE FUTURE

It isn't enough to build bridges; they need to be maintained. A bridge made of cement or steel can have a very long life if it's well maintained, something Montrealers know a thing or two about. If bridges are neglected, they risk becoming dangerous. We must take care of our society's infrastructures. It is our responsibility to redouble our efforts to preserve harmony between our multicultural communities. We must also strive for gender equality and help women's voices be heard. Despite the innate contribution they have to offer in the development of our culture and city, women are too often consigned to secondary roles. The green shift we've seen in recent years must also be encouraged. Let us continue along this path and preach by example. We need to understand our metropolis' role as a leader in cultural and economic matters in order to realize its full potential.

Montreal is green, connected, and open to the world. But above all, Montreal is ours.

Let me tell you about our city. 🍷



PHOTOS:

Page 8 – Jacques-Cartier Bridge, Montreal, QC

Page 9 – Bonsecours skating rink, Montreal, QC

Photos Credit:

Vlad G (Shutterstock)



ALAIN LAMONTAGNE, D.D.
DENTURIST



**Makes, fits,
repairs dentures**

3168, boul. Cartier Ouest
Chomedey, Laval (Qc)
H7V 1J7

Tel.: (450) 682-0907

Office day and night

We take care of you
aramark



Restaurant
services for
institutions,
schools and
companies.
www.aramark.ca



A photograph of a snowy street in Montreal. A traffic light with a red light is visible on the left, next to a snow-covered tree. The background shows more snow-covered trees and buildings. The scene is captured in a slightly desaturated, wintry tone.

Thousands of intersecting streets
Snow-covered stairs, invitations to walk up
Orange cones, predicting tomorrow
Local folk, welcoming folk
You're my city
Montreal

Skyscrapers, bell towers, stores
The Metro, East-West, North-South
Westmount, Saint-Henri
Rich folk, poor folk
You're my city
Montreal

Flowered gardens, community gardens
The Olympic park, public parks
Summer sports, winter sports
Happy folk, warm-hearted folk
You're my city
Montreal

With you, Maisonneuve, Jeanne-Mance
Our founding giants
So many feats, so many tribulations
History folk, festive folk
You're my city
Montreal

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon

Montreal

ALLEY OF PEACE

"AFTER ALL,
PEACE BEGINS
WITH US, WE
HAVE TO TALK
ABOUT IT AND
LIVE IT."





By Suzanne Boivin

Exclamations of joy erupt from all sides of the flowering alley. Summertime in the city is in full swing. Children run and play hide and seek. Tricycles and bicycles cross paths. Flocks of multicoloured doves decorate the ground. Residents of all ages, once strangers, now gather and chat amicably. Some wander through the alley together, while others sit on brightly coloured benches and watch their children play. The Alley of Peace is alive with the buzz of cicadas and the hum of new relationships.

The idea for the Alley of Peace stemmed from a need for a communal space, one that was green, welcoming, peaceful, and safe for the young and old alike.

In the spring of 2015, a recurring incident became a major source of irritation for the residents of the 12th and 13th avenues in Saint-Michel, Quebec. They decided to take matters into their own hands. A child's ball landed one too many times in a neighbour's front yard. She eventually grew tired of the continued disruption and, the next time the ball bounced onto her property, she confiscated the children's beloved ball despite their cries and protests. *But Miss, we only wanted to play!* said little Mohammed in his beautiful Maghrebien-accented French, while his friends Tang and Ebénézeire grumbled in Creole.



TRANSFORMING THE TOXIN INTO AN ELIXIR IN THE NAME OF CHILDREN

Parents of the neighbourhood had witnessed similar confrontations since the weather had warmed and, concerned by the mounting tension, gathered to discuss a possible solution. Residents, many of them long-standing immigrants, lived on both sides of the alley. Residents, whether they were South Americans, Haitians, Indians, Vietnamese, Arabs, or Turks,

cared about their children's happiness and safety, and wanted them to live in a healthy environment. But there was a lot to consider: the vegetable and flower gardens, the insalubrity of certain parts of the back alley, and the traffic.

The back alley was undoubtedly an ideal place for the neighbourhood children to play: parents could see it from their window or garden. The gardens themselves grew precious vegetables for the winter and could not be moved. The concerned residents therefore searched for an amicable solution that would benefit the gardeners and also promote safety and ecology.

MOBILIZING AND TAKING ACTION

I was the original instigator of this adventure, and found my first ally in Mr. Lapierre. The 89-year-old was known as the man who grew flowers around the neighbourhood. He was already up-keeping and beautifying his corner of the street. With the sweep of his broom, debris and discarded newspapers disappeared, making way for cosmos flowers and wild roses. To help spread the word and mobilize residents, I chose Jeanine, Mr. Lapierre's wife of 60 years. Jeanine had stood watch over her street corner for 37 years, and was known and liked by all the neighbouring families. Together, the couple began to spread the news and rally recruits.

We began to go door-to-door to explain the goals of our project. By meeting and speaking with each family, we were able to consider their interest in the project and their willingness to nurture a few planters or sow perennials in their

section of the alley. Everyone's ideas and personal grievances were carefully considered. Within two weeks, four recruits joined our cause: Abdel, a young Turkish student in police training; Sahir, a young Pakistani concerned by the uncleanness of the alley; Anita, a South American woman with a green thumb; and Marion, a retired nurse who wanted a safe play space for her grandchildren.

C-VERT (C-GREEN): AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT

Upon learning about a municipal program that aimed to support the development of green alleys, I contacted the nearby eco-neighbourhoods committee. With their help, we came up with an inspiring plan. The committee got in touch with *C-Vert*, a non-profit organisation that works with teenagers from different backgrounds in Saint-Michel and Montréal-Nord. *C-Vert* mobilized 20 teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17 to do most of the clean-up and floor painting.

The alley was named ALLEY OF PEACE, reflecting our openness to the different cultures of the world. The name is also a prayer for peacefully resolved conflicts. *After all, peace begins with us*, said Stefano, a resident from the 13th avenue. *We have to talk about it and live it.*

During a brainstorming exercise, the teenagers wrote down a series of words inspired by the notion of peace: sharing, solidarity, love, patience, joy, calm, friendship, and generosity. All of these words can be found in the alley, painted in French, Arab, and Spanish, in lime green and black.

Our choice of plants to grow was based on the exposure to sunlight. We enriched the soil and built planters. Three old city benches, salvaged from an abandoned quarry, were polished and repainted in beautiful colours.

CREATING PEACE, A UNIFYING BRIDGE

Walking through the Alley of Peace is now a pleasant and joyful experience. You can wander down a passageway shaded by trees, surrounded by 11 large planters filled



with rudbeckias, fuchsias, and blue bell-flowers, perennials sown with green and pink grasses. The path is welcoming and inspiring, and the residents happily maintain it. *I feel much closer to my neighbours, as if I had a stronger sense of belonging*, affirms Emilio, a young father. *It does me good to walk out into the alley. It really belongs to each of us, and we want to take care of it.*

The development of the Alley of Peace allowed families to get to know their neighbours, to share and create ties, to build bridges, and live in harmony together. The Alley has become an extension of the residents' yards and gardens. Now, children can play ball freely, and the very first community picnic is coming soon. 🌸

PHOTOS:

(Including page 11)

Embellishing the alley –
intergenerational team work

Photos Credit: S. Boivin

At the Heart of Papua

Grégoire Viau is a scriptwriter, author, producer, animator, narrator, translator and presenter. Since 1984, he has been working mainly for *The Productions Via the World Inc* with Daniel Bertolino. During one of his many shoots he met the MIC Sisters to whom he brought his talented collaboration.



By Grégoire Viau



We called them 'primitives', they were said to be scientifically ignorant, but they are the great sages of life.

These wise words could have been said by the MIC Sisters who reflect such sensitivity for all peoples whom at one time were little known to the world. However, these words are those of a lay person, Daniel Bertolino, who is grateful to those missionaries who guided him deep into the jungles in search of those paradise lost. This prolific film-maker and producer from Quebec is being honored at the Vaudreuil-Soulanges Regional Museum with his exhibition – At the Heart of Papua— A Perilous Expedition of Daniel Bertolino

presented until the Fall 2017. Daniel has been my boss for more than thirty years.

LAST IMAGES OF A PEOPLE THAT IS DISAPPEARING

Daniel Bertolino gave me an extraordinary chance to go out into the world and walk in his footsteps. Actually... in a few of his footsteps... because his shoes have greatly travelled as would say Félix Leclerc, the French-Canadian singer and song writer. It is thanks to Daniel that twenty years ago I went to Bolivia where I met Sister Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C., and somehow she triggered within me a passion for the missionaries...

For Daniel, his chance came when he met a Montfort priest, Father Claude Sigouin. Since 1959 his community has been in Papua, New Guinea. Father Sigouin arrived in 1965 and worked there for eighteen years. He is the one who guided Daniel in the deepest jungles of the Western District. Using a machete they would make their way through the dense forests, where rivers separated ethnic enemies, where some of the elderly still remembered the taste of human flesh. But since then, much of this has changed. The missionaries arrived in time to prepare the Papuans for the unavoidable shock of civilizations whose companies were beginning to devour and destroy their forests. Father Sigouin told us that forty years ago, the Papuans knew nothing about a wheel, but today they can drive heavy construction trucks with their cell phone stuck to the ear. What has not changed is the presence of the Montfort Fathers; their leader is Monsignor Gilles Côté, currently bishop of Daru-Kiunga Diocese.

A FILM-MAKER AD EXTRA

Daniel met Father Sigouin in 1970; he was only twenty-eight years old but his road map was already impressive. At the age of eighteen Daniel received a Zellidja scholarship from the French Academy; the purpose was to take up an initiatic journey. Dominique Lapierre, author of the book: *City of Joy* also received that scholarship. Daniel's project was focused on Egypt: he wrote to the president, Colonel Nasser, whom he admired. To his great surprise, Nasser received and responded to the letter which had touched him. As an adolescent, such a response left a mark.



Ten years later, when Daniel was in Papua with Father Sigouin, he had already travelled many times around the world. At the age of nineteen, he had organized film shootings in Pakistan, Cameroon, Morocco. His famous show *Stop Camera* which he produced at the age of twenty-one made him famous in his native France. At twenty-five, he moved to Montreal. With his friend François Floquet, he started his own film company: *The Productions Via the World Inc.* Thus, Radio-Canada aired many hours of his great exploration series, one of which was *The Primitives*—dedicated to those people

who live totally in harmony with nature. Through these series, we discover the Papuans of New Guinea, the Mekranoti of Brazil, the Pygmies of Cameroon, the Kalash of Pakistan, the Orang Kubu of Sumatra, and the Qashka'i of Iran. With these films and all those Bertolino produced afterwards there would be enough material to fill the Louvre museum...

FROM PAPUA TO OUR OWN HERITAGE

The regional museum of Vaudreuil-Soulanges is pleased to present the Papuans. The exhibition is atypical for a museum that is mainly focused on the culture of the area. The director, Daniel Bissonnette, sees it as a way of showing the new immigrants who settle in the region (Daniel Bertolino is one of them) that the museum is also open to the world. Michel Morissette, responsible for the historical and ethnographical exhibitions, sees it as an opportunity to celebrate Daniel's contribution in promoting the local heritage. For the past forty years, Daniel has been living in the region; his last documentary *The Genius of the Place* tells about the restoration of St. Michael's church, the city's jewel.

The exhibition presents art objects brought back by Daniel or lent by the Montfort Fathers; there are also striking photos, texts, film material of another epoch... Especially, there are excerpts from the film *Me no savey (Me don't know)* produced in 1971, whose 16 mm original was put aside all those years in Quebec's cinémathèque film climate controlled vault.

CHILDREN EXPRESS WONDER

The exhibition is pleasing to all; especially the school children from Vaudreuil-Soulanges. Though they see many images on their electronic gadgets, they have never seen anything like this—human beings of another age living in a world where only nature provides for their needs, as long as nature is respected. A spiritual people, where missionaries introduced them to Christ and whom they welcomed with fervor because He does not belittle them.



Exhibition AT THE HEART
OF PAPUA, Daniel Bertolino's
perilous expedition
www.mrvs.qc.ca

PHOTOS:

¹ Papous Biamis in Nomad
– Western District – Papua
New Guinea (1970)

² Father Claude Sigouin, s.m.m.,
and Daniel Bertolino,
film-maker, in a jungle of the
Western District, Papua
New Guinea (1970)

Photos Credit ⁽¹⁻²⁾:
Jean-Paul Duchêne

³ Daniel Bertolino
Photo Credit: Diane Bertolino

Marriage – The Visible Sign of a Creative Love

“The joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church.”¹



By Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

Pope Francis' profound awareness of worldwide family crisis led him to call for an extraordinary Synod of Families to address the major challenges of families in 2015. AMORIS LAETITIA is the fruit of this Synod. In a very profound but simple way, Pope Francis reveals the maternal care of the Church towards

her children. If marital life is in crisis, children are affected. If families are broken, the society is affected and the Church as a Mother also suffers in consequence. Therefore, Pope Francis invites all couples and families to renew their life as couples and to strengthen family bonding.

CALLED TO SERVE FAMILIES

My passion to care for couples and families led me to pursue my career as a Marital Family Counselor in the Archdiocese of Vancouver from 1995 to 2014. Over twenty years of journeying with couples and families, my awareness of the countless challenges in marital and family life was deepened. Through their trust and openness, I was able to enter into their world of pain and hurts, hopelessness and brokenness. I experienced their tangible suffering profoundly, but I also witnessed the creative power within them to transcend their crisis with courage and hopefulness. Their great humility to face their vulnerability and their efforts to change themselves and reconcile with each

other led to countless miracles of healing and reconciliation. Indeed, it made me recognize the creative power of God's infinite LOVE and MERCY at work in them. It also confirms that, despite the many challenges, **marriage is still a blessing par excellence because love overcomes all and transforms all!** Marital crisis is an opportunity for couples to grow in creativity by shedding their unwanted behavior like the autumn leaves and by waiting patiently for the rebirth of new life of togetherness! Pope Francis described love beautifully when he said: *Love opens our eyes and enables us to see, beyond all else, the great worth of a human being.*²

THE NATURE OF MARITAL PROBLEMS

What is at stake in marriages today? A lot of the problems begin with the lack of mutual respect, knowledge, acceptance and good communication skills. Problems can surface as early as before the wedding, during the honeymoon and in the early years of marriage. When two people fall in love, they do not always see what lies ahead. They think that problems will resolve after marriage. This is a deception. So often, individuals carry into the marriage unresolved baggage from their own personal and family issues. After marriage, they are shocked at the sight of each other's limitations and they experience their own powerlessness. On top of all, today's individualism adds more blockage for couples to dialogue, reconcile, adapt and adjust to each other. Thus, marriage which is supposed to be a blessing turns out to be

a curse. When these early stage crisis are not resolved, they are carried on into the later years. They are like dormant volcanoes ready to explode at the opportune time. And this can surface during their mid-life crisis or even into their senior years. Other times, the empty nest syndrome may trigger their awareness that they no longer are capable to tolerate each other, and they end their marriage with divorce. Who suffers? Children! How to reverse the order?

THE POWER OF CREATIVE LOVE

Growth is an on-going process, so is growth in relationship. It needs nourishment, vitamins, caring attention and empowerment. In the case of marital relationship, the nourishment is unconditional love and acceptance. This requires a lot of 'faith' vitamins, courage, forgiveness, joy, honesty, openness and dialogue. A tree knows how to bend and to mend; human beings need to do the same. Being different is not an issue, but being indifferent is a major issue. Being independent is a quality, but being co-dependent is an enmeshment, it is suffocating. A couple needs to be two separate individuals in order to work on becoming inter-dependent. The couple needs to empower and affirm each other constantly in order to strengthen their bonding; thus, in times of difficulties they will stand by each other instead of against each other.

COUPLES CARING FOR COUPLES

I had the joy of working with *Canadian Chinese Marriage Encounter Association* while I was in Vancouver. I witnessed so many couples who had gone through the process of renewal and begin to help other couples. Their dedication to devote themselves in caring for couples in need is admirable. Having left Vancouver in 2014, I had the joy to serve families again in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, through workshops and retreats. This year I had the delight to be invited to give workshops to the *Canadian Chinese Marriage Encounter Association of Toronto*. I discovered another

vibrant group of dedicated couples caring for other couples. The Church is blessed with so many devoted couples who are caring for other couples. This makes the Mother Church a HOME FOR ALL!

THE SECRET TO A CREATIVE JOY OF LOVE

I like to quote Pope Francis' three simple phrases to couples which I believe is key to marital happiness they are: *May I? - Sorry! - Thank You!* As simple as they look, they embrace a very profound meaning behind. *May I?* stands for an attitude of respect, sincerity and humility, treating the other as the HOLY GROUND. *Sorry!* stands for a deep contrition of heart. And *Thank You!* is the secret to a creative Joy of Love!



¹ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* – Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation - No.1

² Ibid - No. 128

PHOTOS:

¹ Young people, reflecting and sharing

² Marriage Encounter session

Photos Credit: MIC



On the Trail of Délia

Délia Tétreault's dream continues to inspire young Haitian women who are drawn to the Lord's Mission. Sr. Carmèneta, who is in charge of the MIC postulancy, informs us about the formation the postulants receive and their big challenge... the house is no longer safe.



By Carmèneta Beauplan,
M.I.C.

PHOTOS:

- Background: postulants' house in construction
- Foreground: a group of postulants

Photos Credit: MIC

In September 1943, the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* arrived in Haiti. They served the population in various fields: education, health care, women promotion, pastoral work, and mission animation. More than one hundred Canadian Sisters left deep and lasting traces of their love and dedication for the Haitian people.

Succeeding them today are young MIC Haitian Sisters who commit themselves to Christ's Mission. They are as dedicated as were their pioneers; multiple situations demand of them openness, gift of self, creativity, and boundless fidelity.

Like in many other congregations, we too are growing older but, thanks to God, we keep receiving new members into our community. These young women who say *yes* to the Lord's calling wish to help their brothers and sisters; they desire to be missionaries here, in Haiti, and elsewhere, wherever they will be called to serve.

WHO ARE THESE YOUNG PEOPLE?

They come from all over the country. They are attracted by our openness and warm welcome, by our simple life style and our way of working in various fields.

We meet these young women in parishes, colleges, and youth rallies. When they express an interest in the missionary life, we propose they visit the Sisters who welcome them in their fraternity. They are invited to participate in monthly meetings where we offer a Christian and human formation; within a holistic approach, we journey with them in their personal development. Self-awareness is an important part of their initial formation as it helps them define the motivations that incite them to follow Christ in the Community of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*.

We also organize mini sessions and day/weekly camps to teach them to live together and experience team-work. After

a certain period of time, a young woman who feels called to live our missionary charism and our spirituality, formulates her desire to begin her postulancy—a two year program which includes: the human/personal identity, christian, spiritual development as well as the religious missionary life and the spirit of the Institute.

During this time, the young postulant takes part in the local Church's mission and our ministries which include catechesis, providing assistance to parish groups, reaching out to the disabled and missionary animation.

OUR POSTULANTS WRITE:

During my formation years, I am learning that Mother Délia was an audacious woman, full of faith, fraternal and determined to do the Will of God. Thanks to her spirituality of Thanksgiving, I have become more spontaneous in giving thanks to God for the beauty of His creation. With all my heart, I thank the Community who unsparingly teaches us to know and love Mother Délia. (Falencia Orisa, postulant - 2nd year)

Because of the love I feel for Christ, I collaborate with enthusiasm to the Youth's Eucharistic Movement (YEM) helping the young to grow in love of God and neighbor; this is a way to gradually build the Kingdom of God among us. Such an experience increases my passion for Christ's mission. I am deeply grateful towards the Community for the formation I am receiving; it makes me appreciate the missionary life. (Evelyne Duprat, postulant - 2nd year)

I have learned the history of this beautiful foundation, realized by Mother Délia in 1902 in Montreal. It is a Community which allows women of diverse nationalities to give thanks to God not only for themselves but for all of humanity. Everything I am currently learning nourishes my faith and gives me a longing to go deeper into the spirituality of Thanksgiving and the MIC charism—hoping that one day I will be able to share these with my brothers and sisters. I give thanks to God for the generosity and enthusiasm of the MIC Sisters and the formation I am receiving. (Wislande Beaubrun, postulant - 2nd year)

AN EXTENDED HAND

Our house where the postulants live is located in Cap-Haïtien, the country's second largest city. In the past, this house was the residence of our Canadian and Haitian Sisters who were working at the *communal home* where the elderly, disabled, and homeless people were welcomed. It is also here that Sisters worked with youth groups at the diocesan level. To all the pioneers who left a lasting mark in Cap-Haïtien, our most grateful thank you for their love and generosity.

Some twenty-five years ago, this house took on a new vocation—that of welcoming young women who are beginning their initial formation in religious life. Currently, we are four professed Sisters, four postulants in training and we will be welcoming four other young women who will begin their postulancy in November 2016. With the years the house has aged and, since it was constructed without the required construction norms, it is not only worn out but labeled as unsafe. Cap-Haïtien is an area threatened by earthquakes; we are therefore anxious and preoccupied for the safety of those women in formation and for the Sisters. According to experts, the house has structural failures; long term use of this building constitutes a danger for those living there.

Taking this situation to heart, a local benefactor generously offered us a piece of land situated in a close by suburb, thus giving us an opportunity to build a new residence for the postulate. With the financial support of our Institute's General Council and a Canadian benefactor the construction has begun. Obviously, there is still a great deal of work to be done to complete this project and our resources are very limited. We therefore make an appeal to those who could be able to offer us a helping hand; such a financial contribution would be received with much gratitude and joy. Thank you! ☺

DONATIONS
MAY BE SENT TO:

**Procure des Missions
Cap-Haïtien House**
121 Maplewood Avenue
Montreal QC H2V 2M2
CANADA

I was lucky enough to grow up in a practicing Catholic household. In some ways, God has always been part of my life. Every Sunday at church, my parents, older brothers, two sisters, and I would always sit together in the same pew, one of our many habits as devout Christians. Eventually these daily rituals sparked a deep, burning faith inside me. Soon I felt the pressing inner call.

From Madagascar to Zambia *"Come and See"*

MY FIRST STEPS TOWARDS GOD

Already, during the preparatory retreat for the reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist, I felt the urge to follow Christ. I was involved in the Eucharistic Youth Movement in Madagascar, and was able

to clearly perceive the mission God had in store for me. There was no longer any doubt that the Lord was inviting me to share the Good News in a very unique way – by becoming a Sister.

My path seemed to be traced by a divine hand, because one day, a Sister from the MIC Institute came to address the members of the youth movement I worked with. Sister Marguerite's words touched me deeply, fanning the flames of my ever-growing faith. I intimately felt the power of God's loving gaze upon me. But how could I answer his call? When I was handed a pamphlet advertising the MIC Institute, a light suddenly illuminated my soul and silenced all of my questions. Drawn to the Sisters' charism and spirit of thanksgiving, I decided to join their congregation. Finally, I had found my path.

WHO TAUGHT ME TO WALK

My religious vocation came to me so naturally that I was ill-prepared for the difficult path ahead. I had no idea how many challenges I would have to overcome.



By Ravaka Andréa
Razafindahy, M.I.C.





meetings or activities. I played melodies to strengthen my message of peace and charity – God’s message.

This music reminded me of my childhood. In the evenings, when we would gather as a family, I was often lulled by the sound of my brothers playing the flute or guitar, in perfect harmony with our prayers. I am so happy to have found the essence of my very first Christian awakenings, here within my international and fraternal life in Kanyanga.

PHOTOS:

Sr. Ravaka with

Zambian children

Photos Credit: MIC

But I was accompanied by the universal benevolence of Our Father throughout my formation years. I pursued a bachelor’s degree in Theology in order to expand my knowledge, and after my graduation, I was invited to complete my formation in Canada. This trip would play a decisive role in the shaping of my life’s trajectory.

In 2009 and 2010, at the International Scholasticate in Canada, I was able to live among young women of different nationalities who, like me, ardently wanted to invest in the Lord’s work. I could not have hoped for a better environment to fulfill my missionary vocation. The group’s multiculturalism and spirit of sharing allowed me to discover the richness of many cultures, and prepared me for the *field work* in accordance with the policies of the Institute. I started to travel in my dreams, from the Philippines to Africa.



In my own way and with my personality, I continue to follow, in His Name, the path leading to Our Father. I try to orient my words and gestures so they reflect this deeply moving verse of the Scriptures: *Come and see* (Jn 1: 39). When my dream of becoming a missionary was finally realized, the Lord invited me to guide the children of Africa towards Him, so that they might also draw from His benevolence and mercy.



TOWARD AND FOR HIS PEOPLE

On the afternoon of December 4th, 2015, I finally stepped onto Zambian soil. I will always remember that emotional day. First, in order to engage with the country’s people, I needed to learn the local language, Citumbuka. I have to admit, it wasn’t always easy, but these efforts were necessary to communicate with the local people and share the Good News.

When words are lacking, music has a way of helping us understand and empathize. Keeping this in mind, I took along my guitar whenever I went to pastoral

With You, O Lord



Jeanne d'Arc Fontaine, M.I.C.
(Sr. Joseph-du-Bon-Pasteur)
1922-2016
Saint-Isidore, Quebec

After completing her nursing course and working a few years, Sister Jeanne d'Arc entered our Institute in 1950. Life as a postulant was difficult; she missed her nursing career, the sick haunted her. The formation years over, she left in 1956 for Haiti where our dispensaries welcomed her expertise and total dedication to the sick. However, her active missionary life ended abruptly. While working at Les Cayes, she suffered from a cerebral hemorrhage which left her paralyzed. Incapacitated for thirty years, she acknowledged having discovered the Essential: in sickness or in health, Mission is where one's heart loves and prays. With gratitude we will always remember you Sister Jeanne d'Arc.



Olga Antosz, M.I.C.
(Sr. Catherine Labouré)
1926-2016
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Sister Olga lived in Manitoba with her parents of Polish origin. While in high school she discovered our community at a missionary exhibition. Her dream of becoming a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception was realized in 1947 when she entered our Institute, notwithstanding the challenge of the French language. In 1954, Sister Olga was welcomed at our Mount St. Joseph Hospital in Vancouver, B.C.—she worked there as a medical laboratory technician. With competence and dedication she organized laboratories as well as a pastoral department. Blessed with a special charism, she accompanied the sick in Vancouver and in Toronto. Sister Olga retired in Quebec, and on July 27 the ultimate call was heard: “Come, my beloved” (Sg 2:10).



Angelita Olimba, M.I.C.
1939-2016
Mamay, Davao City,
Philippines

Courage and determination characterized the life of our Sister Angelita. Her parents both died during World War II; consequently, she went from one adoptive family to another. Angelita's prayerful soul and devotion to the Virgin Mary were her strength: she pursued her collegiate studies and successfully achieved a bachelor's degree and teaching license. Her desire to enter religious life was fulfilled in 1971. From then on, she took on many responsibilities but the most important for her was to work with the indigenous peoples and the poor in Sapang Palay. Sr. Angelita was loved by all because of her great compassion, patience, and peaceful attitude. After a long illness, she was called to her eternal reward on August 13, 2016. She will be missed.



Bertha Bussi res, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marguerite Bourgeois)
1929-2016
Quebec, Quebec

She came into the world with a twin sister. Both of them were called to the missionary life and entered in two different congregations. Berthe chose the *Franciscan Missionaries of Mary* while Bertha entered our congregation in 1951. Her family circle and Christian education awakened in her the dream: to be a nurse and go where the need is greatest. Our dispensaries in Haiti and Guatemala transformed her dream into reality. Upon her return to Quebec, she brought her expertise to the AIDS patients at the *Dehon Center* in Montreal. On September 7, 2016, our dear Sister Bertha was called to her eternal rest. She had accomplished her dream and mission.

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF GUARDIANS

MAKE A DIFFERENCE ALL YEAR ROUND!

One of the best ways you can support Salt + Light is through our monthly Guardians program and here's why:

- Stable & reliable source of funding that allows our ministry to plan for future projects.
- Easy & convenient for you. Your gift is automatically made through your bank account or credit card.
- Cost effective. Automatic recurring contributions mean more of your donation dollars will go towards content that you care about!
- Easy to change, cancel, or temporarily suspend your donations at any time.

JOIN OUR GUARDIANS PROGRAM BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

1-888-302-7181 | www.saltandlighttv.org/donate

Registered Charity # 88523 6000 RR0001



SALT AND LIGHT
Catholic Media Foundation

Main Office

250 Davisville Ave. Suite 300 416 971-5353
Toronto, ON M4S 1H2 1 888 302-7181

Montreal Office

1071, rue de la Cathédrale 438 795-5029
Montreal, QC H3B 2V4 1 888 302-7778

Rogers 240 Cogeco (Ontario) 185 Shaw 160 Bell Fibe 654
Eastlink 356 Telus 159 Sogetel 28 Vidéotron 242



La prescription parfaite
The perfect prescription



N. FRANCIS SHEFTESHY, PHARMACIEN

Tél. : 514.384.6177

Téléc. : 514.384.2171

PRINTED IN CANADA



© C. Guévin

SHARE THE MESSAGE...

... subscribe someone to **MIC Mission News**

☐ *I subscribe / I renew my subscription**

☐ *I SUBSCRIBE A RELATIVE / FRIEND*

☐ PAPER MAGAZINE: **\$15 per year – 4 issues (Canada) / USA: \$20 USD / Other countries: \$30 CAD**

☐ DIGITAL MAGAZINE: **8\$ per year – 4 issues**

Name: _____ *Subscriber No: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel.: () _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please make your
check payable to:
MIC Mission News

MAILING ADDRESS:

MIC Mission News
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval (Qc) H7G 1A4
Canada

Online subscription: www.PresseMIC.org

(450) 663-6460 # 5305

expedition@pressemic.org