

MIC MISSION NEWS

To sow seeds of joy and hope

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SINCE 1923

CANADA

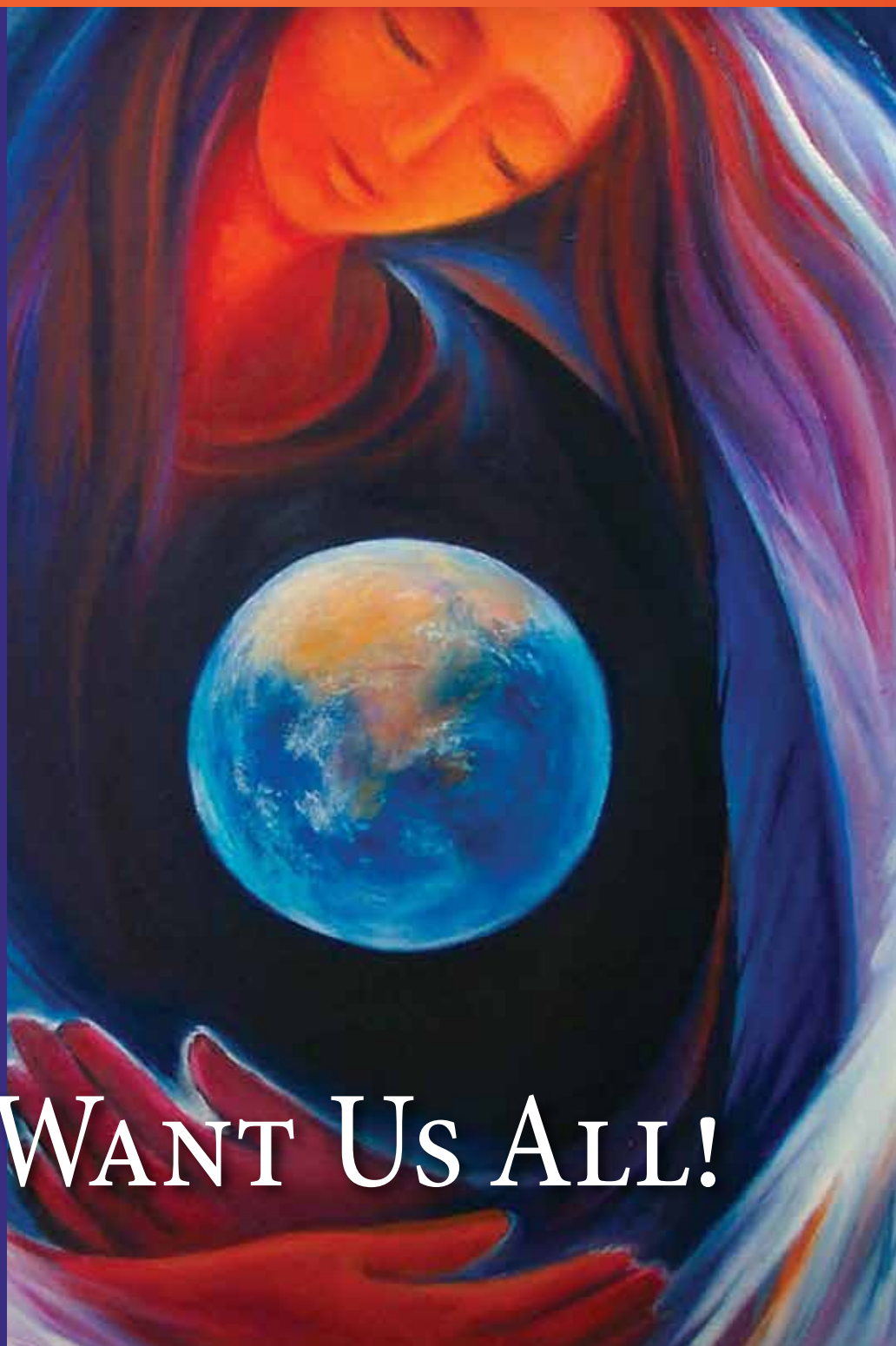
NO – TO HATRED!

MALAWI

CRYING WITH THE POOR

DOSSIER

YES – I WANT US ALL!



MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2017

APRIL

Young People – We pray that young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.

MAY

Christians in Africa – We pray that Christians in Africa, in imitation of the Merciful Jesus, may give prophetic witness to reconciliation, justice, and peace.

JUNE

National Leaders – We pray for the national leaders, that they may firmly commit themselves to ending the arms trade, which victimizes so many innocent people.

.....

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° 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2017

COLUMNS

SPIRITUAL LIFE

4 The Humdrum of Everyday Life — *André Gadbois*

CULTURES AND MISSION

6 We – the Sum of I — *Audrey Charland*

YOUTH

8 Us – the World — *Émilien Roscanu*

10 A Finger Is Worth Two Teeth
— *Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.*

IN FOCUS

YES – I WANT US ALL!

11 Crying With the Poor of Malawi
— *Huguette Ostiguy, M.I.C.*

14 No – to Hatred — *Suzanne Boivin*

16 A Recycled Missionary – ad gentes
— *Librada Bantilan, M.I.C.*

ABOUT THE MICs

18 Living With My Difference — *Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C.*

20 In My Heart — *Suzanne Morneau, M.I.C.*

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Canada

My Marriage Announcement

Yes, I want us all! Here is my marriage announcement, and everyone is invited to the joyful occasion.

A marriage with humanity, no less!

In a time when the world is being ravaged by wars, when walls are being built between nations and dictators are being applauded, we must draw up a marriage contract between politicians and the people, and bring them together in a spirit of fair justice and genuine love. *Yes, I want us all* means saying no to violence and hate, and saying yes to the respect of others and their differences.

The world has seen many Apostles of Peace: Gandhi, Jean Vanier, Mandela, Pope Francis, and certainly someone near you, in your entourage. They chose to walk in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus banned prejudice when He defended the adulterous woman, when He called Mathew the tax collector, and when He welcomed the thief on the cross. Jesus saw people clearly, right into their hearts.

Today, many young people are not afraid to show their faith. They don't worry about what others might say and live according to their deepest convictions; they walk in Jesus' footsteps. Some militate against hate in our societies, while others, more radical individuals dedicate their lives to Jesus' mission, becoming 'all things to all', for the good of everyone.

You won't need to bring gifts to this marriage. Instead, I ask you to banish every scornful word from your vocabulary, anything that might evoke hate or aversion, so that we might create a society of peace, respect, and love.

Christ came to establish a new land, His Kingdom. We are all invited, and it is up to us to respond to His invitation and take part in the ceremony. My marriage announcement is on the table. *Yes, I want us all!*

I await your response.

Marie-Paule Sanjean, m.i.c.

DÉLIA'S COLUMN

Openness to Others

At a time when nations had little knowledge of each other, Délia Tétreault insisted that her missionaries learn the language of the peoples where they were sent, that they become acquainted with their customs and respect their cultures. She wanted her Sisters to promote unity among all peoples.

In your prayer... open your hands and plead... for the restoration of peace and harmony among nations. (July 14, 1917)

I wish you... a perfect command of the Manchus language that you may understand them quickly and help them understand everything you wish to tell them about our good Master. (December 2, 1925)

They must put all their heart into learning the Japanese language and know how to use it well; in other words, I urge the Sisters to master it quickly that they be able to communicate and give more. (February 18, 1927)

That which is most urgent right now is to learn the language: when you will be able to understand and make yourself be understood, then everything will change. The people who are in your company are also baffled by the way you act just as you are with their ways of doing. (February 13, 1929)

Everyone has a right to their own opinion... There's too much resentment, complaints in the world and even in Communities because this one or that one does not think like us. (June 12, 1931)

Our Sisters are newly arrived in Japan, they do not yet know the mentality and customs of the Japanese people; we fear they would not have the tactfulness to conduct successfully the mentioned mission work. (March 21, 1932)

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The Humdrum of Everyday Life

*Jesus was a troublemaker;
He loosened the ties that tightly
bound His people.*



By André Gadbois

For many centuries, grandiose and majestic temples were erected in towns and cities at great cost, thanks to the strenuous efforts of manual labourers. The lives of those men were negligible in the minds of royalty. The temples were – and still are – meant to inspire

our faith in a Supreme Being, and the acknowledgement, adoration, and proclamation of a Force higher than man in the world. Sometimes, members of the lower class were given permission to enter the temples – quietly on tiptoe – to admire the wealth and visit certain holy areas. Today, these temples of power continue to lord over cities thanks to their affluent proprietors who are overly concerned with making a profit. Sometimes known as the ‘upper crust’ of society, these individuals are the ones that influence the ruling government, lead the people, have all the answers, and pave the way. They are rich and determine the economic classes of the world to establish ‘order’ and ensure that everything ‘works smoothly’, because they possess the key to happiness.

*... straightening the backs
of those bent by the weight of despair.*

TEMPLES OF POWER

In Jerusalem, at the time of Jesus, there was a beautiful structure called the **Temple of Jerusalem**, which was much more than a simple place of prayer and pilgrimage.¹ Here, many forms of power came together to organize and rule the small, disorganized community: religious power, political power, economic power, repressive power... The trial of Jesus of Nazareth gives us an idea of the situation. Unsurprisingly, Jesus chased these thieves from the temple (Lk 19:45.46), as he always recognized the value of those who serve (Lk 22:27). He openly defended the poor, took the side of strangers, and praised children for their virtues. He spilled his own blood to reunite the multitude, he said: *May they all be one...* (Jn 17:21). I want us. I want us to be one. I want us to live together in harmony with others, to live our Life fully, starting now. Jesus was appointed this task by his Father. We can therefore understand why so many important individuals joined forces to oppose Jesus of Nazareth; he was a threat to their power and a dangerous dreamer. A dissident! A troublemaker! He loosened the ties that bound society.

*Without a transcendent value to cling to, a model of society to follow, or an exemplary life to imitate, each individual is reduced to the humdrum of everyday life.*² In broad terms, this passage describes our modern society, a society Jesus refused because it abandoned his weaker brothers and sisters. Too often, privacy and indifference progressively promote hate, comparison, solitude, rage, corruption, violence, injustice, and worst of all, despair. They foster the building of big and small temples that treat individuals as valuable commodities rather than intelligent, present, and attentive citizens. In our “technologized” culture, we are slowly becoming hardened and closed-off. We accept our reality with sad resignation. Jesus understood this atmosphere, this nauseous smell of widespread passivity that gently opens the door to violence and indifference. Jesus was not concerned with the Temple’s attendance rate, but rather,

with the sad, often closed eyes of his peers. He devoted himself to opening their eyes and straightening the backs of those bent by the weight of despair. He declared that poverty should be illegal, when it violates human rights and prevents individuals from meeting their most basic human needs.³

HUMANIZATION ACCORDING TO JESUS

In a disenchanted world like ours, our principal shared value is our individualism: the highly trained or educated have the resources to reach their full potential, whereas everyone else struggles to survive with their limited means, in a fragmented society that reduces each person to a number. Our world strangely resembles the one Jesus fought for. He gave every last drop of his blood to make sure that his timid partners, shaken by his Spirit, would emerge from their dens and decide to continue his work. In our modern society, where the Church too often becomes a Temple of its own, we, the partners of the Prophet of Nazareth and followers of Pope Francis, must remind ourselves why Jesus became so angry. Perhaps we will eventually reach Fernand Dumont’s conclusion, quoted by Gregory Baum: *to work towards the humanization of all men and women, we must not be a clerical Church, but a Church of the people; not a Church of Christianity, but a Church of missionaries; not a Church of rituals, but a Church of speech; not a Church of rules, but a Church of human and spiritual experiences; not a uniform Church, but a pluralist Church; not a Church adapted to the world, but a Church that participates in the mutations of the world; not a for-profit Church, but a Church in solidarity with the poor.*⁴

*For Jacques Grand’maison, Jesus was the Prophet and incarnation of a divine Truth.*⁵ ☞

¹ MYRE, André, *Relations*, April 2016, p.29

² PIOTTE, Jean-Marc, *La communauté perdue*, 1987, vlb éditeur, p.127 – English version: *The Lost Community*

³ PETRELLA, Riccardo, *Pour une nouvelle narration du monde*, 2007, Écosociété, p.121 – English version: *A New Narration of The World*

⁴ DUMONT, Fernand, *Entre le temple et l’exil*, p.223, (*Between the Temple and the Exile*), cited by Gregory Baum in *Vérité et pertinence*, p.245 / English version: *Truth and Relevance* – 2015, McGill-Queen’s University Press

⁵ BAUM, Gregory, *Idem*, p.146

PHOTO:

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WE – the Sum of I



Doubt and questioning seem to be part of human nature, and often emerge when we experience trials and tribulations. Even our most deep-seated, unshakeable certainties can sometimes be called into question. When I was writing my memoir, I spoke with many Sisters who freely admitted that they had, at least once in their lifetime, been forced to re-evaluate the whys and wherefores of their faith.

Living and evolving in an environment where acts of war are more likely than peace, I was compelled to reflect on my values and beliefs in this sociocultural limbo.



By Audrey Charland

QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

I was an exasperating child, always with a question on my lips. My poor parents didn't know how to satisfy my curiosity. I bombarded them with a volley of "whys" until they eventually ended the discussion with a defeated "I don't know". I continued to observe the world on my own, making small discoveries here and there. But I was never satisfied. As time passed and my responsibilities grew, I regretfully put aside my philosophical questioning.

That is, until my path was rerouted and taken over by life's mysteries. My study of Catholicism rekindled certain questions that had long been dormant, questions I had never been able to answer. The one that burned the brightest was "Why did I put aside my faith?" Becoming introspective and self-aware was very difficult. After my initial confusion, I was overcome with guilt, anger, and sadness. Finally, I understood that the only possible solution for me was hope. Hope of getting back on track as though nothing had derailed me. As though I had only been absent a few short years.

IN SEARCH OF THE RIDDLE'S ANSWERS

My trip to India marked the beginning of my renewed relationship with my faith and religious practices. My stays in various convents helped me return to my roots. As my research progressed, I was surprised to discover that my observation of others had

a positive influence on my own spirituality. As a student and foreigner, I was able to ask all the questions that had been dormant but ever-present in my mind. A fissure opened inside me, one that continued to grow through cultural exchange.

However, I was hesitant to cross the threshold that separated me from my inner self, a space I feared had weakened and crumbled over time. My first destabilizing thought was that I no longer knew how to enter that space. Had I still been a child, I would have cried out for my mother or father. But an irrational fear prevented me from resuming where I had left off. In my own way, I had to rediscover who I was.

In India, the people's faith seemed to transcend historical injuries and social evils, and I was enchanted by their apparent innocence. The Christians I met gave particular importance to adoration in their daily rituals. They did not view God as inaccessible and almighty, but rather as a friend with whom they could speak openly.

During my time on the other side of the world, I felt His presence at my side. When I returned to Canada, the magic slowly dissipated. The fissure inside me was still open, and nothing but a cold breeze was blowing through.

A SECOND CHANCE

One day, a happy accident occurred. I was working for the MIC Missionary Press, and stumbled upon a website called *I Am Second* (*Je suis deuxième*). Intrigued by the organization's name, I accessed the site and discovered several videos showcasing everyday people and their life stories – people you might pass on the street, in the subway, or at work. Each of them had experienced extreme highs and lows, and in their eyes I could see a shimmering light, one I rarely saw so clearly. Their faith had been tried, and tested, and true.

I absolutely had to learn more about the movement. I quickly made contact

and, in January 2016, I met one of the organizers at a teahouse near my apartment. When I left my office that evening, I was filled with quiet nervousness, as if I were going to meet some secret part of myself. My conversation with Catherine only accentuated this feeling.

I remember her simple question, one that gained significance for me over time. “Do you know Jesus?” Anyone could have answered in the affirmative. But this young woman showed me a new interpretation of Jesus. In her eyes, he was not a picturesque ideal, but an intimate presence in her daily life.

In light of this close and personal relationship with Jesus, Catherine explained what the mission meant for believers. I was amazed by the way she communicated the Message. Her words were relevant and touched on present issues, but did not reflect the individualistic and superficial values so common in our society. By accepting to be “second”, we could compromise between Jesus' idealism, His Love, and our modern world. Faith wasn't about being forced to comply with certain rules, but being allowed to live fully and freely.

The first step to fighting hate is love... self love. To accept our faults and imperfections. To always aspire to become a better person. To create a world where singularities cross and intersect in harmony. Faith has a redemptive power that cannot be compared to miracle cures or worldly possessions. It takes but one step forward to begin a new inward journey and discover the beauty of our Oneness with each other.

In search of this stranger called Jesus, I opened the Bible and began to read. ☞

PHOTO:

Aurélien – *I am second*

www.jesuisdeuxieme.com/

Us — The World

The beginning of a new year is a good time to review our accomplishments and reflect on our choices and their consequences. There are nearly seven and a half billion people here on Earth, and the obstacles we face for a peaceful coexistence are sometimes overwhelming. Working towards a more peaceful world does not mean making empty promises, but wanting to open up and take action. Lasting peace, the kind that will allow human beings to live and grow in respectable conditions, is not a simple thing to achieve. By making certain choices, we can make a difference and help fight the evils of our time: racism, sexism, and inequality.



By Émilien Roscanu

ONE HUMANITY

Nothing is more of a hindrance to dialogue and communion than fear and misunderstanding due to ignorance or preconceptions. We all come from the same place; we are all human beings with a common origin. A person's ethnicity, physical appearance, gender, or beliefs should never be obstacles for social acceptance. The differences we see in others are the cause of the artificial distance between us. Xenophobia is a total misunderstanding of the other, and it's extremely dangerous. We fear what we do not understand, we falsely believe that a person's skin colour or ethnicity are related to one's psychology or intellect. Throughout history, tyrants have exploited this fear and turned it into anger and hate. There are many populists today who advocate for racial hate and segregation. They are no better than those who, in the past, have justified violence against individuals or communities based on their ethnicity or culture. Racism is an

insult to our intelligence and identity; it's a disgrace to the times we live in.

FIGHTING RACISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM

Simply saying we are anti-racist does not make us so. We need to call out instances of abuse and actively fight systematic racial discrimination. Refusing to admit that systematic racism exists in our society is being complicit in this discrimination. Anti-racism is not only about opposing racism, but also going towards the other with open arms and breaking down the virtual barriers separating our communities. We need to recognize our history's mistakes and make sure they are not repeated. A beautiful example of communion and solidarity recently occurred in North Dakota, where several veterans of the U.S. military joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to protest against plans to build a pipeline on their territory. The veterans acknowledged and took responsibility for the injustices committed by their ancestors, and asked

the Sioux Tribe's forgiveness. Given that the genocide of Native Americans is still a taboo subject in the United States, their actions were an important step in the right direction.

Neo-colonialism perpetuates racism and inequality. In the West, we tend to look down on developing countries, even though their poverty or dictatorship is often a result of former great colonial powers that continue to rule their economy. We proudly invest in these countries to enhance economic development, but in reality, we are simply financing their dependence on the international corporations of former colonial powers. To defeat neo-colonialism, we have to stop exploiting developing countries and draining their economies with interest on borrowed funds. Instead, we need to offer them the means to emancipate and educate themselves. One of the principal missions of the MIC is to promote education. Since the institute was founded over a century ago, the Sisters have established countless schools around the world in the hopes that each individual might reach his full potential. Their missionary efforts are characterized by a genuine desire to help the less fortunate gain independence.

SEXISM AND INEQUALITY

Social inequalities are often rooted in racial discrimination, but sexism also plays an important role. We cannot expect to have peaceful and prosperous societies when half the world's population is disparaged, controlled, and marginalized. Women and men are equal, and should be considered as such. The challenge is immense, because in every country around the world, inequality continues to exist. Even here, in Quebec, with our "equal pay for equal work" principle, salaries are not always equal, despite the Pay Equity Act. We tend to think that women are not made for certain professions. We even believe that they are obliged to have children, or else risk public judgement and disapproval. Like racism, gender discrimination is an aberration that must be fought.

Martin Luther King once dreamed of a future where his grandchildren would live *in a nation where they would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character*. This dream must become a reality. Women and men from all countries and corners of the globe must be considered equal. We are the world – ALL OF US. 🌍

PHOTO:

Macao, China

Photo Credit: Émilien Roscanu

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M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

*... we are all human beings
with a common origin.*



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One Finger Is Worth Two Teeth

This true story happened several years ago. Sister Suzanne was living in a high-mountain area of Bolivia, more than 2,500 meters above sea level. She was living with other Sisters in Huancarani, a village at the time without electricity or running water, in one of the poorest regions of the country. As not only the sole doctor in the area, but also the only health professional in a hundred-kilometre radius, Sister Suzanne had plenty of work.



By Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

PHOTO:

Visiting the sick at home
Crédit: MIC

The sound of the doorbell roused me in the middle of the night, pulling me from my gentle sleep. A woman and her 20-year-old son were standing at my door. They had walked several hours to find me. Earlier that evening, she had argued with another woman who, having run short of arguments, bit down on her accusing index finger and tore off the last phalanx. I assessed the damage and treated her wound. The injured woman asked me for a medical certificate to show her village's justice of the peace. It was two in the morning, so I invited her to spend the night in my small clinic, promising to give her the certificate in the morning. She accepted.

It was not even six o'clock when the bell announced the beginning of my day. The woman's son was anxious to leave and asked for the certificate without delay. Once the document was handed over, the two headed back to the village.

A few days later, a young man from the very same village showed up at my clinic,

asking for a medical certificate regarding his state of health. He had sustained facial injuries: his lips were swollen and he was missing two teeth. My assistant explained that this man was the son of the "biter"; the bitten woman's son had punched him to avenge his mother. Once again, I wrote up a medical certificate, curious about how the justice of the peace would rule.

When the bitten woman returned to have her stitches removed, I asked about the judge's decision. *He said that one finger is worth two teeth*, she responded grudgingly.

A judgement worthy of Solomon! In this part of the world, the Old Testament is still strong. The majority of the people are Catholics and diligently receive the sacraments, but they have poorly integrated the message of the Gospel. In this country, too often in search of reprisals and war, we can ask ourselves when an *eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth* will become *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us*? And this is the case in so many other countries. ☺



CRYING with the Poor of MALAWI

MALAWI: PAST AND PRESENT

Malawi was once upon a time a beautiful prosperous land, with its large blue lake, mountains covered with trees, many small rivers of running water, large green gardens, children enjoying plenty of fruits falling from trees, and smiling people with welcoming hearts.

Nowadays, when travelling throughout Malawi, one can feel so sad to see the naked mountains. There are now few fruit trees along the way, the streams are dry, and year after year the rain is scarce. People labor on their farm without having much to harvest. Thus 80% of the 17,500,000 people living in rural areas who rely on farming desperately struggle to survive. It is estimated that 6 million people will suffer from hunger before the next harvest.



By Huguette Ostiguy, M.I.C.

¹ HENDERSON, Prince,
*A Nation in Search of
Redemption – A Media and
Advocacy Statement from the
Catholic Commission for Justice
and Peace – November 11, 2016.*

PHOTOS:

¹ (Page 11) Kasungu, Malawi
*Photo Credit: Mark52 /
Shutterstock*

² Sr. Huguette giving a
course to adults
Photo Credit: MIC

A SAD PANORAMA

A small 10% of the population lives a comfortable life while 40% of the Malawians struggle to survive and 50% live in extreme poverty. The average income is less than one dollar per day.

EDUCATION

The recent population growth of more than 3% per year is creating a great burden on the country. More than 45% of the population is under 15 years of age. Educating the youth is an enormous challenge. Primary education is free but not compulsory. In short, 5% of the children receive no formal education, 57% have an incomplete primary school, 11% study until the end of primary school. Of those who attend secondary school, only 7% actually make it to graduation, and 1% study beyond secondary level. This situation leaves so many young people without much of a future.

HEALTH

Health providers are few and new nurses are not quickly employed due to lack of funds. Some leave the country thus depriving Malawi of the much needed health professionals. Government hospitals and health clinics have little medicine thus obliging the patients to buy medication from private pharmacies but the majority of the people cannot afford that expense. The AIDS epidemic still has devastating effects on the population.

SOCIAL SECTOR

The infrastructure and social services of all kinds seem to have disappeared as corruption has taken over and doors are opened to injustice, oppression, abuse and crime. Human trafficking, killing of people, especially those living with albinism, have become the target of the black market and witchcraft. Domestic violence is increasing as well as sexual abuse of children. The youth turn to robbery, alcohol and drugs. Some young children choose to live

on the street, begging instead of stealing. In big cities unemployment is high and many families on low salaries are left to themselves. The poor of Malawi with its 9 million children are deprived of basic necessities.

FROM DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY

How to explain all that suffering? Climate change is not the only responsible element. As of 1964 to 1992, Malawi was ruled by an austere, autocratic one-party regime. In 1993 a referendum on reintroducing a multi-party democracy put an end to the dictatorial ruling. People had great hope for more freedom, expanded development and a more prosperous Malawi. In the following years, the economy seemed to move ahead without being aware that the country was engaged in the wrong direction. However, with the years, the economy got worse; the Kwacha was devaluated and the inflation rate kept rising. What was happening? The question led to the discovery of what is called ‘Cashgate’ – corruption had infiltrated all sectors of the government and funding projects. Millions and millions of Kwacha were being diverted into the pockets of those with access to that money, enriching those in power and making the poor poorer.

CRYING WITH THE POOR OF MALAWI

With the Church of Malawi, we as missionaries cry for more justice through the promotion of transparency, accountability, good governance and the rule of law. At the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), November 11, 2016, a media and advocacy statement entitled: A NATION IN SEARCH OF REDEMPTION was declared by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. *The Justice and Peace Secretaries issue this statement in order to call upon authorities and the general citizenry, to critically examine our country's state of affairs and be part of the solution. Our message is a call to our leaders in all spheres of life, various oversight entities,*

religious leaders and citizens at large to do some deep soul searching for the betterment of our beloved country.¹

In the statement, serious concerns are highlighted, mainly the harassment of people with albinism, compromise war on corruption, increased cases of human trafficking, the ongoing looting of public resources, lack of tolerance and absence of genuine intra-party democracy, inconsistencies and lack of communication on important matters that creates confusion. As Catholic Church, and through our missionary endeavors, we are committed to act and fight for the poor, the vulnerable, the downtrodden and marginalized in all ways possible in order to make Malawi a better place for all.

We suffer and cry with the poor, the youth, and especially the children. May God hear our cry! 🙏



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NO - TO HATRED!

Is this a chant we might hear echoing through the streets of Montreal? No – it is a global movement, one that is supported by several European parliaments, as well as Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama, among others. The international No Hate Speech Movement, a youth campaign that aims to promote respectful speech on the Internet, is slowly becoming known in Quebec. Their aim is to prevent the painful and often disastrous consequences of online hate speech by educating the public and adopting a firm “no hate speech” policy.



By Suzanne Boivin

The Movement was instigated in Europe by the Council of Europe’s Youth Department. The Council’s forty-seven Member States, along with their Youth Department, have been defending human rights since 1949. In response to the proliferation of human rights violations, they began to address the issue of hate speech, defining it as any form of expression that spreads, instigates, promotes, or justifies violence.

Faced with the difficulties often experienced by immigrants and the tensions of globalisation, the Council urged the European society to rethink their definition of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. The phrase “cultural dialogue” has since been adopted in many international conventions, recommendations, and declarations, and for good reason: only dialogue leads to agreement. The Movement, much more than a simple slogan, calls out any online publication that goes beyond the acceptable limits of freedom of expression.

MESSAGES OF LOVE AND HATE ON THE INTERNET

The Internet offers us endless possibilities of creation, publication, distribution, and consumption of media content,



opening up a space for participation, engagement, and expression. Social media sites allow us to browse freely, stay in touch with friends and colleagues, form new relationships, share media, and express our opinions. Online spaces provide us with countless opportunities to engage with others about causes we care about. But online, anyone can become a helpless victim or an abusive “troll”. While the online world is not without its own values, its tone and subject matter vary tremendously, ranging from brilliant educational articles to horrible, hateful comments. Given the limited number of laws governing online usage, the door is wide open.

Last January, support for *The International Youth Offices of Quebec* allowed five young Quebecers to participate in a No Hate seminar in Strasbourg, France. One participant, Jade Boivin, was particularly inspired by the seminar and expressed

her interest in bringing the Movement to the Province of Quebec.

Back home, Jade, a master's student in international and intercultural communication, quickly developed a plan of action to get the campaign started. Her goal was to develop effective work methods, raise awareness, promote the campaign, find creative solutions, and get people moving.

Her project is centered on action and intervention, and brings together trained youth workers who know how to recognize human rights violations and oppose them. To promote the campaign, members of the committee will meet with students in schools. They aim to raise awareness and mobilize them against hate speech, online harassment, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of intolerance.

THE CONNEXION TEXTBOOK AND WEDIACTIVISTS GAME: FUN TOOLS TO HELP US SEE CLEARLY

The Council of Europe has provided an online manual called *Connexion*, which offers a wide range of activities to help raise awareness. What's more, four young Belgian women (Charlotte De Mesmaeker, Arnal Hamich, Manu Mainil, and Isabelle Van Cutsem) have created a board game called *Wediactivists* to help fight online hate speech. Various animated games are grouped together and present interactive lessons to help teachers use the game with their students. *Wediactivists* lasts 2 hours (including the introduction and conclusion) and is appropriate for children ages 12 and up. The game has four categories, which allow students to expand their general knowledge, be creative, react to situations, and explore a range of themes. For example, some online messages might seem harmless,



but contain sexist language. "Internet users will not necessarily publish posts on Facebook stating that they hate women," Jade says. "But they might publish more subtle statements that could be interpreted as harmless jokes. In reality, these are serious assaults on the dignity of women." Karine Pontbriand, vice president of the movement in Quebec, sees the Internet as fertile ground for hate speech due to its anonymity. Individuals feel comfortable saying things behind a computer screen that they would never say otherwise.

The Internet is an inescapable part of our modern life. Developing young people's critical abilities is essential to ensure the respect of human rights in our society. Learning to recognize and call out hate speech is one way of fighting radicalization. Educated and aware individuals help protect the human values necessary for social peace.

A certain quantity of *Wediactivists* games produced in Europe are now available. School boards and youth centres can borrow the game at no cost. For more information, contact Jade Boivin, volunteer coordinator of the *No Hate* campaign, at jboivin@nonalahaine.org. 🌸

The International Youth Offices of Quebec (LOJIQ)¹ and the International Youth Office in Brussels (BIJ)² have invited forty young francophones to Quebec City to participate in the first 'No Hate Speech' activity in the province

¹ Acronym which stands for the French title: Les Offices Jeunesse Internationaux du Québec

² Bureau International Jeunesse

PHOTOS:

¹ Michel Robitaille, PDG of LOJIQ, Jade Boivin and the Minister Christine St-Pierre

² Young militants at a LOJIQ meeting

³ Jade Boivin, president of the campaign: *No – to hatred!*



A Recycled Missionary – *ad gentes*¹

Even though they are ageing and decreasing in number, nothing can stop the MIC Sisters in the Philippines from proclaiming the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ to the non-Christians.



By Librada Bantilan, M.I.C.

In 1979, a mandated MIC Initial Evangelization Program was formulated. The implementation of the Program started with the opening of two initial evangelization missions: one in Miarayon, Bukidnon and another in Malita, Davao del Sur. The trail blazers of those missions were well prepared: they attended a 5-week seminar on *Approaches to Human Development*; they took a crash course on *Applied Missionary Anthropology*; they had a 4-month exposure to their prospective mission area and learned the respective languages of the tribes they were assigned to evangelize.

The mission approach of the two teams differed. The Miarayon Team started with human development, then evangelization. The Malita Team worked purely on evangelization and Church planting, but had to engage later in development projects requested by the people.

In 1995, the commitment of the MIC Sisters to the PME priests in regards to the Evangelization Seminars was terminated. Trained people took over the responsibilities of the Sisters who had already completed the

evangelization process in more than one hundred Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs). Sister Librada Bantilan interviewed Sister Elizabeth Relacion who worked closely with the indigenous Filipino tribes.

Sr Librada: Why do you label yourself a recycled missionary – *ad gentes*?

Sr Elizabeth: My experience as a missionary – *ad gentes* refers to my evangelized and evangelizing life with its activities among indigenous non-Christian Filipino tribes. After fourteen years of being with the Tagakaulu tribe in Malita, Davao del Sur, I thought my mission days were over. After some rest, I was transferred to Canada where I was engaged in mission-related activities for a period of ten years. In 2013, I returned to the Philippines and six months later I was appointed to some non-Christian tribal groups in Bukidnon. To my delight, I was still able to hike and take a ride in rickety tricycles to reach three parishes in remote villages where indigenous Filipino tribes are located. I truly saw myself as a recycled missionary

– *ad gentes* and this is indeed a real privilege given to me from on high.

Sr Librada: Is there any difference between your mission experience as lived now compared to back then?

Sr Elizabeth: Yes, of course. Presently, as a missionary among non-Christians, I am alone, apart from my congregation. My companions are priests and lay missionaries. Before, in the mission field, we had to live in our own house and be at least three MIC Sisters together to constitute a community of evangelizers. Nowadays, I live with any tribal family who invites me. However, I go back to the Sisters' house at least three times a week, for purposes of community animation and implementation of our community life program.

Sr Librada: The changes you have mentioned refer to religious community living. What about changes in mission approach?

Sr Elizabeth: Of course, times have changed. There are now tribal lay leaders in the Church. We have started to network with tribal group leaders who are non-Christians. There are some, already baptized, who are active in the life and mission of the parishes. Through them, I am able to strongly invite the “shy ones”, even if not baptized yet, to join the BECs. These offer a new way of becoming Church members; they are informed, formed, and transformed to become mature Christians, disciples of Jesus. The change for me is that I no longer start and form Basic Ecclesial Communities but rather I help provide their members the needed information, formation, and transformation through the Eucharist and the Word of God.

Another significant change is the establishment of the Religious Multipurpose Cooperative (REMPCO). It provides sessions on Christian Life formation and also pre-membership seminars which include financial literacy, followed by a Bible journey every week. Aside from that, a demonstration farm of eight hectares for vegetable production has been set up in two parishes. Another parish will use three hectares for the plantation of herbs, hardwood, and fruit trees; these will provide livelihood and contribute to land preservation. This is a way to raise awareness

of the earth's sacredness. REMPCO has also started a Health Care Apostolate making use of herbs to produce natural medicines.

Sr Librada: You seem to enjoy being a recycled missionary – *ad gentes*. Do you have any secret/s to share with those who are looking forward to proclaim the Good News of Salvation to the non-Christian tribes in the remote villages of the Philippines?

Sr Elizabeth: It is no secret that I love my indigenous Filipino brothers and sisters who belong to different tribal groups with their specific languages, customs, traditions, religion, and other cultural traits. That is why finding a home away from home, when I am in remote villages, is not difficult for me. Moreover, I am familiar with some of their practices and I try to apply the phrase we have all heard: *While in Rome, I am a Roman.*² And St-Paul did say: *I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some* (1Cor.9:22).

To give an example: One day, I was with the women cooking in a kitchen. A group of non-Christian leaders sat down with two priests to express their desire of building their own chapel and to plan their incoming evangelization seminar. Where did their desire come from? Their answer: We saw what is happening on the other side of the mountains (obviously referring to the BECs.) Then, the leaders called me to take part in their meeting. What joy! Now, my weekly visit to each of the three tribal communities always includes a one-on-one business chat with the tribal leader concerning mutual concerns, problems, aspirations, etc.

Sr Librada: Any parting words from you before ending?

Sr Elizabeth: I would like to make a few suggestions/proposals which I have at heart. First, my proposal to the local Church: That in our own parish we have a regular Basic Ecclesial Community sharing among ourselves, religious and lay. Second, I would like to ask the members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to strengthen and support the on-going formation of the BECs in seminaries and centres of formation. I thank you for this interview. 

¹ AD GENTES: Decree on the Missionary activity of the Church; it is meant to proclaim God's Kingdom to those who do not know Him.

² (origin – St. Ambrose in 387 A.D.)

PHOTOS:

¹ A Eucharistic celebration

² Sr. Elizabeth with an assistant

³ Sr. Elizabeth (1st right); Sr. Gerarlyn Saldua, Scholastic (background)

Photos Credit: MIC



With joy and gratitude, Sister Gabrielle Drouin accepted the challenge of recounting her long life story. For 52 years, she lived in Taiwan, experiencing life as an outsider and fighting off loneliness. Here is her story.

Living With My Difference

By Gabrielle Drouin, M.I.C.

DEPARTURE FROM INVERNESS

When I was 19 years old, I left my hometown of Inverness, Quebec, to begin my life as a missionary. I first heard the call in elementary school, when a missionary from Africa passed through our town. He told us that he could not complete his mission without help. As he spoke, I began to imagine a different world, one filled with excitement, unlike my own calm and peaceful home. I was overcome with sadness, and later that night I asked my parents' permission to think awhile before going to bed. Stunned, they agreed. I was only eight years old. But this was the moment when I first heard the call to become a missionary. I was already different from other children. For years, I lived with this great dream in my heart, until the day I was welcomed to the MIC noviciate in Laval in 1951.

DEPARTURE FOR TAIWAN

In Laval, I did not immediately find the great challenge I was dreaming of, but I felt it was a step in the right direction. One pleasant evening in May 1956, after

teaching for several years in Trois-Rivières, I received the Good News. My Superior General announced that Taiwan was waiting for me. While Taiwan was not the Africa I had dreamt of as an eight-year-old, I could feel my missionary dream taking form. Many of my colleagues were already there, and I would be joining them. But I would have to confront and live with the pain of leaving behind for many years, my parents, family, friends, country, customs, and the French language. Yes, I would leave with tears in my eyes. At that time, the Internet and Skype did not exist. With other MIC Sisters who were leaving for Hong Kong, I took the train to Vancouver; from there I embarked on a boat to Taiwan. Imagine: twenty-eight days of travel, twenty-two of them on the high sea.

When I arrived, everything started out well. Everything was new. But reality eventually set in, and I was faced with the difficulties of trying to integrate in a country so different from my own. The challenge nearly overwhelmed me. I struggled with depression and loneliness. I was exhausted from trying to adapt, to learn the language, to get used to the cold and humid weather.

When Christmas came, nothing reminded me of my home in Quebec. Once again, I needed time to think. Was the missionary life really for me? Then, during a moment of silence and prayer, I heard the Voice of God: *Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear: Forget your people and your father's house. Then the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him.* (Psalm 45). Impossible to describe the peace and joy that filled my soul and dispelled all doubt. I understood that God himself had confirmed my missionary vocation. I never had any doubts after that moment. I was able to take root in Taiwan and accept its many differences.

MRS. HUANG, RADIANT-DAWN

Living in Taiwan for fifty-two years meant writing many beautiful pages of missionary history. Of all my fondest memories, the one I would love to share with you is about Mrs. Huang, or Radiant-Dawn (the meaning of her Taiwanese name in English). She was sick and knew she had very little time left. She knew God, but not His true face. She was afraid of Him, but also believed that He was just and would welcome her in Heaven because she thought she had lived her life according to her conscience. However, her heart was not filled with joy. At one point, we had this conversation:

Sr. Gabrielle: *Does God love you?*

Radiant-Dawn: *No, she replied angrily.*

Sr. Gabrielle: *Why not?*

Radiant-Dawn: *Because I'm not beautiful, I'm not rich, I'm not educated, and I'm sick. After a moment she added: But He is just, and He will welcome me in Heaven.*

Sr. Gabrielle: *Does God need your money?*

Radiant-Dawn: *No, she replied with conviction.*

Sr. Gabrielle: *Does He need your appearance? Your education? Your health?*

Radiant-Dawn: *No!*

Sr. Gabrielle: *You see, many people do not understand that God is LOVE. I want to introduce Him to as many people as possible. He is the one who gave you life, who*

created you. You are unique. In the universe, there is no other person like you. He created you because He loves you.

As I spoke, her face slowly brightened. *God is good!* she cried out suddenly with a marvelous smile. The joy of knowing that she was loved by God, whom she knew to be fair and just, remained with her until her final hour. At the end, she said: *Thank you my Sister. God is good!* and she fell asleep in the Lord. I was filled with a profound happiness. I knew that I had not come to Taiwan for nothing.

RETURNING HOME

Forged by my years as a missionary, I was disoriented when I returned to Quebec. The province was so different from the one I had left behind. I admit that I sometimes felt like a foreigner, even with the understanding and sympathy of my Sisters, who knew what it was like to come back home after so many years. Happily, reliving and reinterpreting my experiences abroad has allowed me to remain joyful and thankful. Despite the feeling of being different, I understand that my actions have helped build communion. As Radiant-Dawn once said, *God is good!* 💕



PHOTOS:

¹ Sr. Gabrielle with three generations of a family friend

² Sr. Gabrielle with kindergarten children at Guangxi

Photos Credit: MIC

IN MY HEART



Learning about a new culture requires a lot of time and love. After forty years in Japan, Sister Suzanne speaks with us about the country's language of flowers.

By Suzanne Morneau,
M.I.C.

PHOTOS:

¹ Floral arrangement by

Sr. Suzanne

² Sr. Suzanne and her
professor, Kyoko Habu

Photos Credit: MIC

One Sunday evening, in Japan, I watched a wonderful show about the history of this country. I learned a lot about the Japanese mentality, and certain touching scenes were especially memorable. In one scene, filmed in a 14th century monastery, a strict samurai master taught three teenage students who were aspiring to become samourai. The master was short-tempered and did not give his students very much time to answer his questions. One day, the silence of his students became intolerable. He stood, picked up a vase filled with flowers, placed it in front of them, and took out one of the most beautiful flowers. He then brandished his sword and, in one fell swoop, cut off its blossoming head. Astonished, the students looked at their master and wondered which of them would suffer the same fate. *Where is the flower?* the master asked them after a long silence. Taken aback, none of the students dared answer. The master's impatience grew until one of the bravest students answered – *on the table*, another added – *near the vase*, while another said – *in front of you* which only exasperated the master. The atmosphere became unbearable until

finally, a clear and firm voice rang out – *in my heart*, exclaimed the youngest student who had been silent until then. The master's anger dissipated. The class was over.

TAKING TIME TO SMELL THE ROSES

Japan is very fond of flowers and nature, and is the home of several grand masters of flower arrangement. These floral specialists are known internationally and have students all over the world. For many years I lived in Tokyo, and was lucky enough to live next door to a very qualified teacher who had mastered Ohara flower arrangement. One of the characteristics of the Ohara School is the use of seasonal flowers and branches, and flat or cylindrical vases. My neighbour often donated her time to help decorate our chapel with her floral creations. I always wondered why a master of flower arrangement needed so much time to make a single bouquet. As my own work took up most of my time, I had very few moments to observe her.

One day, realizing that my missionary work in Japan was nearing its end, I decided to try out the mysterious art of

flower arrangement. I signed up for a class taught by my neighbour.

I like flowers very much, but during the first class, I worried that I would get bored spending so many hours arranging bouquets. I sat down at one of the classroom tables where various tools and accessories had been laid out. There were also two long-stemmed flowers, branches, some of which were dry, others were blossoming, and a few large leaves. I doubted that there were enough flowers to keep me busy for more than an hour. The goal of the class was to learn *tateruc* which means standing up. After a few explanations and a question-and-answer period, the teacher left us to work in silence. I shyly tried to follow her instructions.

DISCOVERING HARMONY

After a few minutes, I was finished. I looked around and noticed that the other students were deep in concentration, trying to find the perfect angle for the two flowers, carefully choosing their branches and leaves. I watched them stop and start over patiently, sitting immobile for minutes at a time as though waiting for the elements to harmonize themselves. I didn't dare take apart my work and start over. My hands felt clumsy. How could I cut the stems without ruining everything? The teacher walked over and looked at my work. *Not bad*, she said. *But try again, we still have forty-five minutes*. Sensing my hesitation, she slowly, carefully picked up the flowers one by one, then the branches, and finally the leaves. She delicately placed them in front of me and said: *You need to place this one first, because it will welcome the other*, she said, pointing to the flower with the longest stem. *You need to give it a lot of care and space, the way you would an important visitor. Have faith in your own intuition and take the time to observe the two flowers. Try to understand their language, their desired foliage. Try to see how all these different elements might contribute to the beauty of the whole*.

The message I received: take time to be one with nature's beauty. Let the different elements find their place. I left my class with my flowers in hand, ready to rearrange them at home. I made a lot of progress during my two years of study. One thing is certain: I learned how to take the time to smell the roses.

THE FLOWER INSIDE YOU

The Flower Inside You is the title of an anonymous Japanese poem. A participant from one of my interpersonal relationship courses shared it with me during one of our sessions. ♪



THE FLOWER WITHIN YOU

*The flower that is deep within you,
If only you knew its beauty.
There is a flower inside you,
Take care of its fragility,
Day after day.*

*The vastness of the heavens is within you,
If only you knew its bliss.
Take care of its infinite space,
Day after day.*

*When you experience tenderness within you,
There is a friend inside you.
Take care of this marvellous gift,
Day after day.*

*When you welcome this friend's tears within you,
There is love inside you.
Take care of this growing love,
Day after day.*

*When you contemplate the flower, the heavens,
the friend, and the love within you,
Maybe you will dare say in those moments
That God is within you.
So take care of God's Love that lives inside you,
Day after day.*

With You, O Lord



Marie Fugère, M.I.C.
(Sister St-Eusèbe)
1913-2016
Portneuf, Quebec

At the age of 22, Sister Marie Fugère was welcomed at our novitiate and at the age of 103 she was welcomed into the Father's House. Sister Marie lived through the seasons of her long life with creativity that defied all obstacles. Artist painter, she repaired and beautified multiple statues, created all kinds of cards even during her centennial year. Our missions in Haiti welcomed her many talents: cabinetmaking, rebuilding and repairing after cyclones, planting fruit trees, teaching and catechizing. She was unsurpassable in so many ways. We thank you, Sister Marie, for your gift of self at all times; keep us in your Marian and prayerful heart.



Mariette Provencher, M.I.C.
(Sister Marie-René)
1928 – 2016
Nicolet, Quebec

At a very young age, Sister Mariette began to show her love for teaching in the attic of her home. In 1948, she entered our novitiate and excelled as an educator in our Quebec schools. Ten years later, she went to Madagascar where she was welcomed with joy and gratitude. Students who had Sister as a teacher were lucky, they were sure of succeeding in their studies. Her beneficial discipline was greatly appreciated on graduation day. After thirty years of service in the Red Island, Sister Mariette came back to Canada and gave a helping hand in community services according to her health. We thank you Sister for your generous dedication until the very end.



Renée Ratel, M.I.C.
(Sister Renée-du-Sacré-Cœur)
1925-2016
Montreal, Quebec

Always ready to serve with joy and gratitude, Sister Renée evangelized everywhere she went. She entered our novitiate in 1944 and was assigned to Bolivia in 1966; her dream had finally come true. First, she went to Guatemala to learn Spanish and then took a complete course in sewing. One of Sister Renée's priorities was promoting women's empowerment. In La Paz, the girls were enriched by her teaching; she knew how to communicate her knowledge for the benefit of all. Though illness came knocking at her door, she resumed her responsibilities soon after recovery. Upon her return to Canada, the sewing department of our Mother House benefited from her talents and generous service. We thank you, dear Sister Renée.

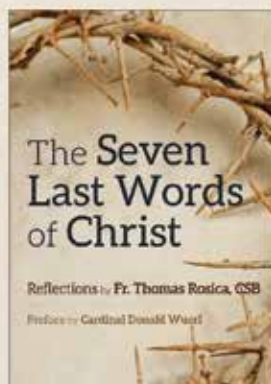


Rachel Blanchette, M.I.C.
(Sister Marie-Rachel)
1916-2016
St-Liboire, Quebec

The numerous handicapped at *La Charité, S'Il-vous-Plait* in Les Cayes, Haiti, as well as the poor elderly at the *Asile Communal* in Cap-Haitien, were privileged to have been in contact with Sister Rachel who served them with unconditional love for forty-five years. With resourcefulness, she provided not only the necessary corporal and spiritual help each one needed, but the love and understanding that surpassed all expectations. When Sister Rachel was admitted to our novitiate in 1937, she had already experienced how to be attentive and sensitive to the extremely fragile and tender hearts of her grandparents. Sister was well prepared for her mission in Haiti and also well prepared to celebrate an eternal Christmas on December 25 at the age of one hundred.

The Seven Last Words of Christ

Reflections by **Fr. Thomas Rosica, CSB**



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VIRGIN MARY,

*I come to present to you the homage
of faith and love
of the holy people of God.*

*I come in the name of families,
with their joys and trials;
of children and youth, open to life;
of the elderly, enriched by years
of lived experience.*

*In a special way, I come to you
on behalf of the sick, the imprisoned,
all those who find the path difficult.*

*I also come in the name of all those
who have arrived from distant lands
in search of peace and of work.*

*Under your mantle
there is space for everyone,
for you are the Mother of Mercy.*

*Your heart is filled with tenderness
for all your children,
the tenderness of God,
who through you took flesh.*

*You are close to us and you support us
in every difficulty.*

*May you be blessed, O Mother,
now and forever. Amen.*

Pope Francis

(Excerpt: Prayer to our Immaculate Mother
Mary, Dec. 8, 2015)