

MIC MISSION NEWS

To sow seeds of joy and hope

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SINCE 1923

PERU

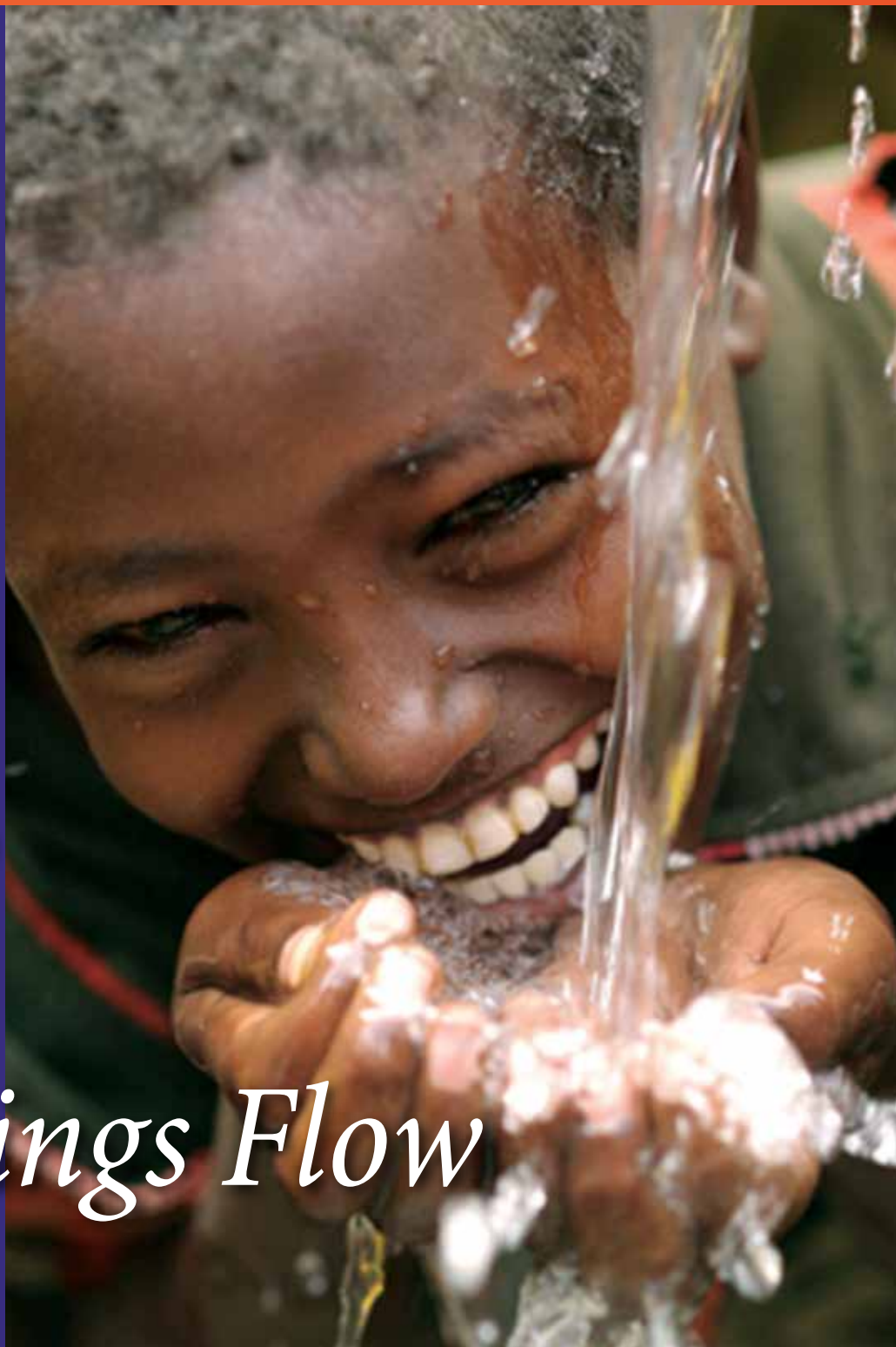
S.O.S. PERU
2017

VIETNAM

BLOOM
WHERE YOU
ARE PLANTED

IN FOCUS

Let Springs Flow



MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS – 2017

JULY

Lapsed Christians – For our brothers and sisters who have strayed from the faith – we pray that through our prayers and witness to the Gospel they may rediscover the merciful closeness of the Lord and the beauty of the Christian life.

AUGUST

Artists – For all the artists of our time – that through their ingenuity they may help people discover the beauty of creation.

SEPTEMBER

Parishes – We pray that our parishes, animated by a missionary spirit, be places where faith is communicated and charity is seen.

.....

Masses for readers' intentions offered in the following countries:

January: **Canada**

February: **Cuba**

March: **Philippines**

April: **Haiti**

May: **Canada**

June: **Bolivia**

July: **Malawi and Zambia**

August: **Hong Kong and Taiwan**

September: **Madagascar**

October: **Peru**

November: **Japan**

December: **Canada**



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IN FOCUS

LET SPRINGS FLOW

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THIRST



In countries with hot climates, the inhabitants know what it's like to be thirsty. In the city of Les Cayes, Haiti, researchers have located a plentiful spring, one that flows day and night. When it was first discovered, the people said: *We will turn off our taps to save this precious water.* But according to specialists: *The water must flow at all times, otherwise the spring will be diverted.*

Our current issue's theme, *Let Springs Flow*, reminded me of this event. Inside each person flows a spring to be discovered, one that must be channelled, directed, developed, and shared. We must overcome our fear that it will dry up, and journey to the water tables of our selves to develop this precious treasure. We must help it grow from a simple trickle of water into a veritable cascade. Through Baptism, we were submerged in the spring of Love. It flows plentifully inside us. We are the ones who have to tap into it. Aurélie Caouette, recently proclaimed venerable, and DéliaTétreault both knew how to listen to this spring. Through their contemplative and missionary prayers, they shared God's immense love with the world.

In the Gospel, the Lord asks the Samaritan woman for a drink: *Give me a drink.* And again, on the cross: *I'm thirsty.* What is Jesus asking for? Water? Perhaps. However, according to Saint John, the Christ is thirsty for love. We must have something to gain by rediscovering these plentiful springs inside us.

Are you thirsty? How many people strive towards an ideal and desire a life that bears plentiful fruit? Surveys have revealed that many people no longer believe in electoral promises or reports from journalists or other sources. Why? They are thirsty for the truth, for a society that is fair and just, for real achievements. These desires are the first steps along the path toward the true spring. Jesus was thirsty; the young and the old are also thirsty for this pure and plentiful water, this spring that regenerates the human soul and never dries up.

Are you thirsty? Inside this issue, you will find trickles and rivulets leading to the inexhaustible spring. Don't turn off your tap! It will flow plentifully to quench the thirst of those who need it.

Marie-Paule Sanjean, m.i.c.

Inner Freedom – A Source Of Joy

Venerable Délia Tétreault's inner freedom was her source of joy. On certain occasions she talked about it.

Your health, like the duties of your heavy responsibility, demand that you always remain in deep peace and freedom of mind. (April 2, 1918)

Let the latter act freely according to her conscience. (1918)

Live cheerfully in the holy freedom of the children of God. (September 23, 1921)

If the Superior knows how to keep a total freedom of spirit and of heart, God will make of her His servant and will work marvels through her. (October 23, 1922)

Constantly ask for the genuine liberty of God's children who, out of necessity, give attention to worldly things but do not give themselves to anybody and do not attach themselves to anything. Whoever acts in this way is above the trials of this life and anticipates something of the peace and joy of Heaven. (February 26, 1923)

I never say anything but my pure and simple thought without any insinuation. When propriety does not allow me to avail of this freedom I become silent. (July 21, 1923)

Allow your pen to write freely; let your heart speak. (December 10, 1927)

In all things which have no consequences, allow each one to express freely her opinion. There is such dissatisfaction... because one or the other does not think like us... It's a pity to spoil the charm we could experience in family life for things that are not worth it. (June 12, 1931)

**FOR ALL FAVORS
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An Inexhaustible Spring

In our weary society, who will acknowledge the refreshing spring inside us and encourage us to welcome those who cross our paths?



By André Gadbois

The stretch of land behind our house reaches the horizon; whether the soil is cultivated or covered with snow, the rising sun creates such marvellous beauty. The evening sunsets are just as wonderful in February as they are in August. I recently decided to devote more time to the sun. I watch its slow passage and nourish myself with its divine Beauty to help me cope with the ugliness of society and the terrible

injuries Humanity continues to inflict upon itself. Citizens are increasingly silent; they are treated as simple customers who have nothing to say. The common good has become a term used by rich shareholders, by many politicians who remember that cause for a moment (at election time) but then fail to fulfill it. *Our ability to act in the world and to live humanely is at stake.*¹ We humans continue to act as though we

have the luxury of acquiring a new planet. We don't take the time to think about our actions or take firm steps to provoke change. We are unconsciously damaging our well-being, our environment, and the lives of the less fortunate who seek to live here. In other words, we're shooting ourselves in the foot. When we feel overwhelmed, we often flee our responsibilities, leaving space for the power-hungry who want to shape Humanity as they see fit and who want to become "KING".

A KIND OF BAPTISM

I recently minded my two granddaughters (aged 5 and 9) during their rainy spring break. We were playing a game when the eldest suddenly said to her little sister: *You can't win! You can't win!* The 5-year-old, annoyed and determined, proved that she could win. Are we able to react to the ugly and discouraging injuries inflicted upon our Humanity? Are we too submissive to take charge of our environment, as Jesus of Nazareth would have? *I will not turn your stones to bread; I will not throw myself over the mountain for your pleasure; I will not get down on my knees and applaud you. Love one another!* Jesus of Nazareth worked every day to liberate the springs lying dormant around Him. A kind of baptism!

Through personal interventions, Jesus revealed to His people that His Father had given us each an inexhaustible spring of Compassion, Beauty, Justice, Solidarity, and Creativity, one that only wants to flow freely. He asked His disciples to leave in pairs to awaken the inactive springs in the region. He asked those who were hungry to gather in small groups so they could reach out and share their meagre resources without shame. Jesus taught us how to free our dormant springs. Humans are too often isolated, withdrawn, and fearful; we need to be awakened and supported so that we can play our roles. When we stand upright and see and appreciate one

another, freed from our fear and insecurity and shyness, we become creators and artisans of Beauty. We take part in discussions, start collaborative projects, debate opinions and ideas, listen to our neighbours, and take responsibility for the future, without waiting for the permission or intervention of the powerful leaders of the world. Like my 5-year-old granddaughter, we are capable of thinking for ourselves and with others to build a better world. Everyone who lives on planet Earth must take part in shaping it with justice and love; not only the elected officials, who often excel in manipulation, be given that right.

¹ RAVEST, Jean-Claude,
Le désert et l'oasis,
Nota Bene 2017, p. 29

PHOTO:
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Awaken the inactive springs...

THE DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE

Without fresh spring water, more and more people are feeling isolated, tired, breathless, weak, and lost. Because of this, they're abandoning Life. Others ignore the Beauty inside of them and through apathy they unconsciously contribute, one way or another, to the deterioration of their brothers and sisters. The human race is one community.

Freeing dormant springs means giving those around us the desire to contribute, to help unknot difficult problems, to end exclusions, to dress those who are cold, to house those who are wandering, to comfort those who have lost everything, to reconcile enemies. An awakened spring contributes, as Jesus of Nazareth did, to the Beauty of the World. It showers those who look upon it, no matter their age. 

SEARCHING FOR OUR SUMMIT



Maslow Pyramid



By Audrey Charland

Every fountain has a source,
and every source has water.

The logic of this affirmation might seem obvious upon first glance. However, many people, absorbed in their individual lives and worries, have forgotten the basic principles of human existence. They no longer know where they came from, or where they're going.

MASLOW'S PYRAMID

Psychologist Abraham Maslow decided to rethink the path of human development with his famous hierarchy of needs pyramid. The idea is simple: if you satisfy your most basic needs (food, water, sleep), you can climb to the next tier of the

pyramid, until you eventually reach total self-fulfillment at the summit. In other words, if you are unable to satisfy physical needs, you will be unable to satisfy safety needs (second tier), to develop a sense of social belonging (third tier), or to feel confident and respected (fourth tier).

Theoretically, this structure is very logical, but in practice, it's very difficult to follow. At one time or another, we've all tried to skip a tier, telling ourselves that sooner or later, our imbalances will straighten out and our weaknesses will fix themselves. In hindsight, we have to admit we were wrong. While some might say that you need to break some eggs to make an omelette, you nevertheless need to have

the eggs. Risks need to be calculated; you need to think about the necessary investments as well as the possible benefits. What's the use of abandoning yourself to an all-consuming love if you don't have anything to eat or drink the next day?

THE CHERRY ON THE CAKE

The same goes for personal accomplishments. Success, and how you define it, can take on many forms throughout your life. Regardless of your socio-economic status or level of education, self-realization is possible depending on your means and ambitions.

From what I've seen, a person's ideals are often coloured by his/her cultural and social values. In fact, the beliefs that are encouraged and propagated within communities influence how individuals perceive their futures and aspirations. However, we are often compelled to act on instinct and feeling, which muddies the waters.

People will often say: *You're born for this!* Or perhaps: *It must be in your genes!* Most of the time, these types of comments are taken lightly; the speaker might only want to boost your ego or appease your disappointment. But if we examine these expressions more closely, they can be interpreted as philosophical and spiritual. Perhaps we must first accept our mission in order to reach self-fulfillment.

Several decades ago, when women were first and foremost wives and mothers, some women chose the path of Sisterhood, paving the way for new generations to freely acknowledge their slumbering faith. Of course I don't wish to diminish the joys of motherhood. However, there is reason to believe that the limited number of choices for women, at that time, made it difficult for them to consider different possibilities. There were many who could not or dared not imagine themselves beyond family and motherhood. While some put blinders on, others looked inward toward their interior landscapes. Increasingly diverse vocations began to take shape.

TO EACH HIS OWN MIRACLE

Human beings don't come with instruction manuals or guidebooks. Each person pursues one's goals according to his/her own desires, talents, and limitations – and luck is also a factor. Miracles are made from the sweat of our brows; they require both hard work and contemplation. It's interesting to consider the ways in which we can adapt to become more successful.

Too often, our friends will beg us to take better care of ourselves and to listen to our needs. We nod politely, but usually fail to take their comments seriously. But popular wisdom often holds a lot of truth. In the cacophony of blinking lights, shrill alarms, ringing cell phones, honking horns, and unbridled cries in the city streets, we often forget the subtle sound of silence.

You can't reach the final tier of the pyramid by going to the grocery store, or sitting in a classroom, or searching for a soul mate. Those who try will return empty-handed, and will stubbornly continue their quest on a road leading nowhere. You need a strong dose of humility and respect for your uniqueness to reach the fifth and final tier. Others before us have been able to set aside their prejudices and scruples in order to open their hearts to the Call that is their destiny.

Freeing our respective springs will help us nurture our soil and discover our means of expression. Whether we're a peaceful stream, a lively cascade, a sudden fountain, or a stormy sea, we must remember to protect the water that allows us to take shape. We will experience losses and gains as our lives take surprising dips and turns, but no matter what happens, it will be our responsibility to use the resources at hand and justify our reason for being, regardless of our individual hopes and faiths. 🌊

PHOTO:

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WATER: A Source Of LIFE And DEVELOPMENT



Originally from Donnacona, Quebec, Gilles Raymond has been living in Indonesia for the past 16 years with his wife and two children. In the early 70s, Raymond worked closely with Opération Dignité (Operation Dignity), a social movement that protested the town closures occurring in the Gaspé and Lower St. Lawrence – a historic moment in Quebec that has now nearly been forgotten. When Raymond moved to Indonesia, he continued to live by his principles. Believing in the solidarity and

responsible action of the collective, he decided to implement honour loans – a system that was used in Quebec a few decades ago – to help the poor in Indonesia. “Whether you’re born here or somewhere else is pure chance,” Raymond says. “We’re all human. We can’t remain indifferent.”

By Suzanne Lachapelle

Note: This article was greatly inspired by the documentary film: *A Bridge Between Two Worlds* produced by Pascal Gélinas.

PHOTOS:

¹ Gilles Raymond

² A well - source of life

Photos Credit: G. Raymond

THE FIGHT FOR WATER

Without water, life and development are impossible. Here in Quebec, running water is commonplace; in other parts of the world, it’s a luxury. Gilles Raymond confronted this problem in Indonesia. He wanted to change the lives of farmers in remote villages by giving them access to water. When he arrived, the country was emerging from a 32-year dictatorship, and Raymond quickly realized that money received from international aid was not reaching those who needed it most. What’s more, the Governor disliked him because of his determination to help the poor.

Raymond eventually moved to Flores Island, where he helped the Christian and Muslim farmers work together to repair and rebuild their villages’ infrastructures. Many of the towns had received quick and shoddy renovations because the Indonesian government was pocketing the subsidies. Today, thanks to Raymond’s Water Bearer Program initiative, 36 villages in the region

have access to running water. When one village has water, they must help the next village gain access as well. Through this collaborative effort, the ancestral link between individuals and their community is restored.

THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

Access to water didn’t solve everything. Raymond also wanted to help the local communities combat poverty. He knew the farmers couldn’t take out bank loans. Instead, they needed development partners to help them become autonomous. One day, partners showed up by chance: passing tourists offered to loan a sum of money to a handful of families in order to help them buy land and grow ginger, which is more lucrative than corn. These families agreed to repay the loan after 7 years, after their ginger plantations turned a profit. This arrangement is known as an honour loan. Thanks to Raymond’s Program Otonomi, 13 families harvested 22 tons of ginger in their first year. Local autonomy was at

their fingertips, and a bond of solidarity was forged between the Indonesian families and their contributors based in North America and Europe.

PROGRAM OTONOMI

Raymond's goal was to help individuals become autonomous and capable of making their own financial decisions. He believes people should be able to invest according to their needs. Unlike NGOs that only provide help for a year or two, Raymond has worked hard to provide guaranteed and continuous long-term help in Indonesia. He sees and comprehends the outcomes and difficulties; he knows the people well enough to understand how to use local ideas and resources.

Program Otonomi has helped improve the quality of life of many families. With the revenue generated from their ginger plantations, they established a fund to help rebuild the villages and install electricity. What's more, they set up a waste recycling cooperative – the very first in the country. Every Friday, the community takes care of garbage collection. Everyone participates. Recyclable objects are sent to a recycling facility where they are eventually resold. The profits generated from recycling waste help cover the local children's school fees. The cooperative, set up by a few individuals, is working hard to change people's mentalities and raise awareness by demonstrating the value of waste.

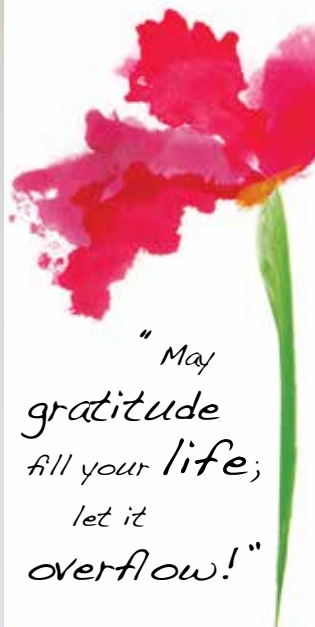
THE CHURCH OF HUMANITY

Program Otonomi is about people helping people. Everyone looks out for one another, regardless of their religion; that's the Church of Humanity. Program Otonomie receives funding from Caritas, an international Catholic agency that supports emergency aid and grassroots programs, and each dollar is carefully taken into account. The profits go directly to the villagers, who decide what they want to do with it. Together, they share the fruits of their labours. 



Gratitude

can transform
life into
happiness!



" May
gratitude
fill your life;
let it
overflow!"

- Délia Tétreault

Dear Benefactors,

Many times, we published mission projects requesting your help to provide aid needed by the local populations as well as to facilitate the work of the missionaries in the field.

With compassion, you responded generously.

- For the purchase of a pick-up truck for the rural school in Bolivia (I.E.R) - THANK YOU!
- For the help given to pursue the construction of the postulants' house in Haiti - THANK YOU!
- For contributing to the creation of our new Web site where over a thousand archived issues can be found in French and in English - THANK YOU!

In the name of the MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, we wholeheartedly THANK YOU for your generosity which makes it possible for MISSION work to continue; your support encourages us to pursue our commitments with enthusiasm knowing you are with us in solidarity.

In the past, it was said: Your pennies are worth gold in mission countries. Believe me, this is still true.

With gratitude, we pray to your intentions.

The Management

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IN FOCUS – LET SPRINGS FLOW

S.O.S. PERU 2017

By Monique Fortier, M.I.C.

The importance of water in our lives is undeniable. It can save lives but it can also destroy. Recently in Peru, torrential rains caused rivers to overflow; massive mudslides swept away roads, bridges, and farms in the region of Huachipan. Families have lost everything. These devastations awakened the hearts to solidarity—reaching out to those most in need. The photos which we are publishing show the generosity and the ingenuousness of the people.

Floods and mudslides killed more than 200 people and injured many. We all know this is a tragic consequence of global warming.



Preparing free soup for everyone



Distributing the meal



MIC Mission team came to help



Food and clothing received from Carri

We hope that international solidarity and efforts will be intensified in protecting our environment; the poorer countries are those who suffer the most from the destructive force of nature.



Courses in catechesis for children



tas



Tents for the disaster victims, Cajamarquilla



By Marie-Paule
Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Creating your own happiness

There is an old saying that, if you want to be happy, you must laugh for at least five minutes a day to maintain a healthy life balance. But we know very well that our hearts are not always light, and opportunities to laugh don't come along every day. How can we find happiness in our daily lives?

CHANGING YOUR PERCEPTION

Seeing your life in a positive light is not always easy. There are so many small frustrations that assail us. We are faced with aches and pains, unpleasant people, noisy children, and the incessant yapping of the neighbour's dog. We are easily irritated and our tolerance level is not very high. What can we do?

We must try to turn things around by freeing our internal springs. When faced with pain, we should consider ourselves lucky and thank the Lord for having lived mostly healthy lives. So many people are suffering more than we are, and when we realize this, our own pain suddenly becomes more bearable.

If someone or something bothers you, try to be charitable. Why not welcome those who appreciate you and want to spend time with you? Children are sometimes very noisy, but it's so wonderful to see them have fun. Why not laugh with them? A barking dog probably only wants to go outside for its daily walk. We all need a bit of fresh air now and then. These small shifts in your perception can help you find happiness and appreciate life. If you're happy, you will share your happiness with others. Isn't this a worthwhile mission?

LETTING GO FOR A BETTER LIFE

When we experience particularly difficult moments in our lives, such as the loss of a loved one, a cancer diagnosis, or a change of residence, we must work hard to free our internal springs and keep our happiness alive. It's so hard to let go and find a new path. One day, we will all be faced with such difficulties. Where will we find the strength to keep going? We must convince ourselves that our lives call us forward; that every step we take will bring us internal peace and help us let go.

God is always present, like a loving Father; he never abandons us. Are we not worth more than a sparrow or a lily of the field? His grace is there, but we must welcome it. Can we keep a loved one with us when death comes knocking? No – better to let them go. They've accomplished their mission on earth. But when we are the one the Lord calls, what can we do? We all know that one day, our time will come... but when? As the song says: *Everybody wants to go to Heaven but nobody wants to die*. Is our faith not resilient enough to give us strength? On his deathbed, my father said: *We don't know where we're going, but the baby in his mother's womb doesn't know what's waiting for him on the other side either*. As he thought about his life, he added: *It wasn't so bad. I have faith*. Let us trust in our faith.

You can't direct
the *wind*
but you can
adjust your
sails...



"Try to see
all things
from the
right
perspective."

- Délia Tétreault

CHANGING RESIDENCE

When you reach a certain age, and living alone is no longer safe, your loved ones might suggest you live in a nursing home. It's quite a shock. You have to accept that you're going to lose your driver's license and your independence. You have to sift through your possessions that are imbued with memories – furniture, knickknacks, clothing – and decide what to keep and

*His grace is there,
but we must
welcome it.*

what to throw away. You won't have as much space as before and you can't bring everything with you. Sometimes your children have to make the hard decisions for you, and the sadness is overwhelming – but it's important to let go. To maintain serenity and internal happiness, I suggest that you return to your deepest spring, where true peace resides. Our Father in heaven will never abandon us: *My grace is enough for you.* During his time on earth, Jesus experienced many losses. He was abandoned by His apostles and betrayed by a friend. He understands our distress, He comforts and

supports us with His grace. We are never alone. Let us live with the belief that good things are just beyond the horizon.

AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SPRING

Life alternates between renunciations, trials, and happiness. Children don't always get what they want, but they experience wonderful moments of joy. Students worry about their homework, but are rewarded with the joy of success. Young people must build their future, figure out their career paths, and find companions to spend happy lives with. Young parents try their best to educate their children to ensure their future. Retirement is a restful time and signals the achievement of certain dreams, but old age is just around the corner. In every stage of life, we can be thankful for our faith, because we are the children of God. Only he can understand our distress and fulfill our aspirations.

If we live the events of our lives in peaceful joy, we will feel a strong spring of thanksgiving for every precious, happy moment the Lord has given us. Our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, once said: *In every circumstance, courage and faith.* It's a simple, brave, and bold principle to help us create our own happiness. ♡

*"Life brings
pain all by itself...
Your responsibility
is to create
JOY!"*

- M. Erickson



*"When
you experience
difficulties, stay
JOYFUL !*

*Storms
always pass
and **SUNNY**
periods do
come back!"*

- Délia Tétreault



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Bloom where you are planted



By Pham Thi Dieu Hien,
M.I.C.



I was born on October 24, 1983 in Sóc Trang, a city in South Vietnam. My parents are originally from North Vietnam. In 1954, when the communists took over the country, a priest advised my parents to move south; in doing so they could practice their faith freely. With great fervour and courage they travelled by boat leaving everything behind them. Since then, all my relatives settled in the south. In collaboration with other Catholic members, my family cleared a piece of land which was given to them and they built their own church. It was named Thiêt An, which is a combination of the two words of the parishes where they came from: Thiêt Tranh and An Quý. My parents were married in 1975 when South Vietnam became independent. I am very grateful to have been raised in a very religious and God-fearing family. I am the fourth child of seven children: four boys

and three girls. My elder sister Teresa is also a Sister with the Sisters of Providence of Portieux (SPP). When I was a child, my father never missed waking us up early so we could go to Mass every day. Later, as a youth, I got involved in Church activities.

When I was about seven, I met a foreign lady who was visiting our country. Because I was curious, I approached her on the street and we tried to communicate with an English-Vietnamese dictionary. I was struck by her friendliness and kindness and I wondered if she were a missionary. Later, I was touched by the kindness of my grade four teacher who allowed me to write an exam I had missed. These two encounters left a deep impression on me and I dreamt of becoming an English teacher one day.

After I finished high school, a decisive moment came: entering college to become an English teacher or answer the call to

religious life. I had made up my mind to go to college; but God had a special surprise for me. Fr. Joachim Vu, a distant relative of our family was coming home for a short vacation. This priest promised to support me if I would like to enter any convent in Vietnam or in Taiwan. Before I gave my final answer “yes” or “no” to Fr. Joachim, I sought advice, regarding the offer, from my Dad, Mom, my two Grandpas and Grandmas. All of them, except my paternal Grandma, gave me the go signal and the freedom to decide for my life. They said to me : *You decide. If you are happy, go for it. We will support you and pray for you.* My heart was filled with joy and I took it as the Lord’s way of telling me to leave my homeland and go to that foreign land.

A few months later in 2002, Fr. Joachim came home for another visit and brought along with him two Sisters from Taiwan. He introduced them to me as Sr. Marthe Lai and Sr. Agnes Mao from the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*, (MIC). I could hardly communicate with the two Sisters in English but by God’s providence, Fr. Joachim was our translator and everything seemed to be according to God’s plan. After my short encounter with the Sisters, like a young seedling, I patiently waited to be uprooted one day by my Gardener to where He willed to transplant me.

Since studies in the Philippines offered more opportunities in light of religious formation, it was decided that I should go there instead of Taiwan. So on March 11, 2004, I landed in Manila with the full support of my family; even my Grandma had reconciled with my choice by that time.

At first, I stayed with the MIC Sisters while learning English with them. Shortly after, I took a four-year course in Religious studies. In 2008, I started my postulancy and then went on to the novitiate. I was initiated to a life of solitude and prayer, of deepening my relationship with God, Christ, Mama Mary and Mother Delia. This experience confirmed my capacity for the

religious missionary life. In 2011, I made my first profession as a MIC Sister.

The joys I have experienced since that day propels me in giving myself totally to God in the spirit of Thanksgiving. Did I encounter any challenges? Yes, of course! Learning two new languages such as English and French has not been easy and I shed many tears. Another big challenge was the sickness of my father because he has been not only a father but also a spiritual director. This event really put my vocation to the test. However, with the support and prayers of my Sisters, and especially with the encouragement of my father to go on, I was able to overcome the temptation of returning home to help my family.

I had just become a temporary professed Sister (scholastic) and was still taking courses in the teaching of English as a second language when I was asked to go to Vietnam. I went back several times, during the summer, to teach English to our Vietnamese candidates and give assistance to the Sisters there.

Before our final vows, scholastics are invited to live an experience of renewal and life at the *MIC International Scholasticate*. It is a time of intense deepening of the MIC vocation lived in a multicultural Gospel-inspired community. For this purpose, the scholastics are sent to Canada to be immersed in the milieu where our Mother Foundress lived. Therefore, on December 27, 2016, I was privileged to come to Canada to prepare myself for this program. I am now studying French and hopefully I will be able to continue on my journey to become a full-fledged MIC Sister.

As I have started a new chapter of my life here in Montreal, I give thanks and praise to God for being always present in my life and guiding me along His path. My zeal and openness to learn outshine the need for adaptation to a new place, the cold weather and a new language; I will try my best to grow well and bloom where I am planted as a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception. 🌸

PHOTOS:

¹ Discovering the beauty of winter

² First profession – Philippines

Photos Credit: MIC





On January 22, 2017, a Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated at the Precious Blood Monastery in Saint-Hyacinthe in honour of Mother Catherine-Aurélie of the Precious Blood, who was declared “Venerable” by Pope Francis in December 2016. We would like to highlight this event and remind our readers that the missionary Sisters are supported in their apostolate by the prayers of contemplative Sisters and devoted Christians who care about extending the Reign of God.

Let Your Sun Shine



By Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE FOUNDRESS

*The true sun is the God who fascinates you;
He is the beginning and the end,
who calls you to His mission.*

These words could easily be attributed to a fervent missionary wanting to shine the light of the Good News across the world. However, these words were inspired by the writings of a contemplative named Aurélie Caouette, otherwise known as Mother Catherine-Aurélie, Foundress of the Religious Adorers of the Precious Blood, declared Venerable in December 2016.

MULTIPLYING MONASTERIES

Aurélie Caouette was born in Saint-Hyacinthe in 1833. In 1861, she established the very first institute for contemplative religious Sisters in Canada. Despite being cloistered, these devoted Sisters heard the call to share the love of God with as many people as possible. In Mother Catherine-Aurélie's lifetime, new monasteries were erected in Toronto (1869), Montreal (1874), Ottawa (1887), Trois-Rivières (1889), Sherbrooke (1895), and Nicolet (1896). Others were established in the United States: in Brooklyn, N.Y. (1890), Portland, Ore. (1892), and Manchester, N.H. (1898). One monastery even appeared in La Havana, Cuba in 1902.

MOVING FORWARD

Mother Catherine-Aurélie passed away in 1905. Her Sisters continued to spread her message in Quebec: in Lévis (1906), Joliette (1907), Mont Laurier (1934), Amos (1958) and Chambly (1991); and throughout Western Canada: in Saint-Boniface (1918), Prince-Albert (1923), and Gravelbourg (1926). Monasteries were even erected in China (1924) and Italy (1925).

CELEBRATING IN MEMORY OF THE FOUNDRESS

To honour their Foundress, the Sisters of the Saint-Hyacinthe Monastery invited members of their religious family to join them in celebration: friends came from London and Hamilton, Ontario, from Calgary, Alberta, and Manchester, New Hampshire. Among the parents and friends of the Religious Adorers of the Precious Blood, many associated lay people were present. An organist, a flutist, and a choir (*Femmes et Hommes de Chœur*) animated the event. The Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe, François Lapierre, P.M.É., presided over the concelebration. He highlighted the dual roles played by Venerable Mother Catherine-Aurélie and her Sisters: contemplatives living a life of prayer, but also missionaries spreading the word of God

to all those who visit the monasteries and have access to their prayers.

CONTEMPLATION AND EVANGELIZATION

Contemplation and missionary life: despite being very different, it's no surprise that these two vocations are intrinsically linked. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, a Carmelite nun, never left her cloister, but was named patron saint of the missions alongside Saint Francis Xavier, who evangelized vast territories in Asia. Both walked in the footsteps of Jesus, offering up their lives, prayers, and actions for the extension of the Reign of God on Earth. Jesus taught us to say *Thy kingdom come* when addressing God our Father.

UNITING THE PEOPLE UNDER ONE FAITH

Following the example of these great Saints, many of Jesus' disciples have followed one or both of these vocations. For example, we can recall Marie of the Incarnation, the first missionary Sister in New France. In her monastery, unsatisfied with simply sharing the Good News of the Gospel with the aboriginal people at the convent and the occasional visitors, she travelled the world in spirit desiring to see all people united under one faith. She would pray: *Here I am Lord, I travel the world in spirit to find all the souls redeemed by the Blood of my divine Husband... I kiss them to present them to you. Through Him, I ask for their conversion.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

The Venerable Délia Tétreault, Foundress of the first missionary religious institute in the Americas, insisted that her Sisters be able to join their life of union with God and their apostolate. Prayer needed to be an important part of their lives. *Pray, dear Sisters, pray!* she wrote. *Be women of action, but with souls of prayer. If we do not pray, the Good Lord will not bless our work.*

SUN OF GOLD

The Venerable Mother Catherine-Aurélie wrote in her spiritual testament: *my heart is full of passion. I would like to attract the hearts of others, and give them all to Jesus Christ.* Her Sisters considered her to be a "golden sun"; she reflected the true Sun and illuminated others with the light of her faith lived within the monastery. Through her life of devotion, work, and message she brightened the lives of many people around her.

LIGHTERS OF HOPE

Why not dream about a thousand small suns shining over our world? These suns being the simple lives of the baptized, the disciples of Christ, conscious of their role as bearers of faith and lighters of hope, embracing the world with charity, as Jesus did. He said: *I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!* (Lk 12:49) Why shouldn't we all be shining suns? Along with all the contemplatives, missionary priests, nuns, dedicated lay missionaries, with all those who offer their sufferings, their work, their joys, their trials for the Sun to shine in the hearts of all peoples, may our prayers bring about peace among nations and universal brotherhood. ☺

PHOTOS:

¹ Venerable Aurélie Caouette

² Sister Micheline Proulx with Bishop François Lapierre, P.M.É. during the celebration commemorating the Foundress

Photos Credit: APB



A Vegetable Greenhouse Beats the African Sun

In the Spring issue 2017, Vol. 44, No. 2, Sister Huguette mentioned, in her article, the consequences of drought weather in Malawi and its effect upon the poor population. In this edition, she describes a fantastic project which gives rise to hope.



By Huguette Ostiguy, M.I.C.

PHOTOS:

¹ The gardener, Chimwewe, talks about cultivation to the ladies, Miss Hara and Mrs. Banda

² Learning together: (left to right) Mrs. Nkhonjera, Mrs. Banda and her daughter Christine, Miss Hara, Sr. Veronica Kamwera, Mrs. Hara, Chimwewe, the gardener

³ The greenhouse

Photos Credit: H. Ostiguy, M.I.C.

Our small Community of MIC Sisters lives in Mzimba, a small town in a large rural area of Malawi, where our neighbors struggle every day with poverty. They especially lack food due to poor soil and a long, hot and dry season. Last year, we wondered what we could do to help ourselves and our neighbors accomplish zero hunger, one of the United Nations sustainable development goals. Challenged to consider what actions we could take to help end hunger and poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all, we looked to our community garden and thought about shade.

We had recently heard about a new material that was being used to make garden shades in other places of Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world. We learned it was successful in helping to cut down the impact of our scorching sun on vegetable gardens. After some investigation, we decided to build our own vegetable greenhouse.

Our greenhouse is very different from the traditional type used in cold countries where heat is needed to grow vegetables and flowers during winter. Here in Malawi we need to protect vegetables from the sun,

especially during the hot and dry season from May to December. Growing vegetables where the average annual temperature is 92 degrees Fahrenheit, with only five months of rain, is a challenge. Often, families go hungry for about half the year.

We were very excited about our plan to build a greenhouse where we could grow vegetables the whole year-round without having to spend an extraordinary amount of money on water during the dry season. The structure is very simple – it is constructed with metal bars to support the sunshade material that cuts the sun's rays up to 80 percent. We planted the usual tomatoes, beans, carrots and onions and also decided to experiment with some new types of vegetables. We sowed new varieties of green leaves because they are the main part of the everyday diet for the people.

Our first year became an immense learning experience. We did not know how much shade and how much sun would be needed to grow vegetables when it is raining or when it is not. We gradually learned to adjust the shades. The first year grew enough vegetables for our own use and to sell to our neighbors.

At this time of the year – the hot season, vegetables are especially scarce. One day, we were delighted to see a young mother coming with her baby perched on her back (the traditional way mothers carry their babies) to buy some vegetables. She said she needed them to feed her other children when they returned from school in the afternoon. Being able to buy fresh vegetables made her so happy that we were convinced she would spread the word to her friends.

Sure enough, her friends and neighbors came, not only to buy but also to learn from us how they might build their own greenhouses. Local women's groups also began showing up and we invited others to come and see that it is possible to grow food even in the hot season. When they come, we also suggest they consider growing different kinds of vegetables, as well as the traditional ones, to add variety to their diets.

We currently sell mostly green-leaf vegetables that the women chop into small pieces and cook into a stew with tomatoes and onions to eat with traditional “nsima,” a white corn meal cooked into a kind of polenta. As our experiment becomes more successful we plan to extend the greenhouse so we can increase the number and varieties of vegetables we now grow. Another goal would be to sell the produce at better prices. But our most important hope is that families will consider building their own greenhouses so they can have their favorite, healthy vegetables all year, close at hand.

Having families take up this new way of growing food will contribute to the United Nations global goals of zero hunger, ending poverty and promoting good health and well-being. 🌱

Huguette Ostiguy is a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception from Quebec, Canada, and a psychologist who lives in Malawi.



With You, O Lord



Fleurette Lagacé, M.I.C.
(Sr. Paul-Émile)
1934-2017
Ste-Anne-des-Monts, Quebec

Having received a profound Christian education both at home and at school, Fleurette easily adapted to the various missionary commitments she was called to accomplish during her adult life. In 1953, she entered our novitiate. With competence she fulfilled various community services and for six years she served as general secretary. In 1970 she was mandated to Taiwan; while there she discovered her affinity with the Chinese people. She would say: *I feel I have a vocation for China*. Faithful to this specific calling, the intercommunity organization *Amitié-Chine* (S.J., P.M.É., M.I.C.) took form in 1983. By way of Sr. Fleurette's clever insights, it responded to multiple social needs until 2005. Magnificat, dear Sister Fleurette! Mission well accomplished.



Gertrude Paré, M.I.C.
(Sr. St-Hubert)
1926 – 2017
Châteauguay, Quebec

Welcomed at our novitiate in 1946, Sister Gertrude pursued her studies in nursing. She served in Malawi, Africa, and excelled in many areas. As hygienist she organized a mobile clinic and travelled to remote areas where medical aid was offered, pre-natal and post-natal services were given. Intuitive, competent, resourceful, she was midwife while also being in charge of the dispensary and the hospital. She would say: *This is my way of proclaiming Jesus*. When she returned to Quebec, she organized in her native parish the *Hunger Meal* on every Good Friday; the profit went to the missions. At the age of 90, she looked back at her missionary life and expressed gratitude. With you, dear Sister Gertrude, we sing the Magnificat for your dedicated life.



Armandine Gauthier, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marie-de-la-Paix)
1918-2017
Laterrière, Quebec

On March 17, 2017, Sister Armandine entered the Father's House after a long active life: her father's death, a new family with a foster father, the birth of four half – sisters and two half-brothers, plus moving, and life at boarding school. She often said: *The eternal Father looked over us*. In 1945, she entered our novitiate equipped with a teaching degree. In Cuba, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, she fulfilled her dream as educator; she easily adapted to the various cultures and was entirely open to God's Will. She once confided she had acquired a *deep joy that not even decades could obliterate*. Today, dear Sister Armandine, may you know the joy and peace in God's eternal abode.



Emmanuela Vincent, M.I.C.
1956-2017
Cap-Haïtien, Haïti

On Easter Monday, 2017, our Sister Emmanuela heard the Beloved's call : *Arise, my friend, my beautiful one, and come with me! The winter is past...* (Song 2:10) She is only 60 years old! However, she has accomplished so much since her entrance at the novitiate in 1980. She was involved particularly with the youth in Chile, Peru, and Bolivia; then within the community she was animator at the interprovincial novitiate in Bolivia, she served on the provincial council in Haiti and on the general council of the Institute. She was appointed Vice Postulator for the cause of canonization of Délia Tétrault for a period of three years. Dear Sister Emmanuela, you will long be remembered and we know we can always count on you.

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Jesus, Source of the Living Water

*Lord Jesus, you went
with your mother
to draw water from the well.*

*You know the importance
of water.*

*You know how precious it is
and how it gives life.*

*Quench the thirst of the poor.
Relieve the women
and children who walk
every day to fetch water.*

*Jesus, you are the Source
of living water
help me to respect water.*

*Give me the thirst
for your living Word
and guide me in being
a spiritual source of water
for others.*

Amen!

Ghislaine Salvail, sjsh