

MIC MISSION NEWS

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To sow seeds of joy and hope

SINCE 1923

Haiti

A Crowning
Achievement

Canada

Montreal Chinese
Catholic Mission

In Focus

*Take a Look Into
Your Inner Self*



Missionary Prayer Intentions 2018

JANUARY

Religious Minorities in Asia:

That Christians, and other religious minorities in Asian countries may be able to practice their faith in full freedom.

FEBRUARY

Say "No" to Corruption:

That those who have material, political, or spiritual power may resist any lure of corruption.

MARCH

Formation in Spiritual Discernment:

That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.

Masses for readers' intentions offered in the following countries:

January: **Canada**

February: **Cuba**

March: **Philippines**

April: **Haiti**

May: **Canada**

June: **Bolivia**

July: **Malawi & Zambia**

August: **Hong Kong & Taiwan**

September: **Madagascar**

October: **Peru**

November: **Japan**

December: **Canada**

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A Moment of Reflection

The pace of today's society is such that time is passing us by. Time slips between our fingers. We often hear people say: *I did not have time; I do not have time*, and yet... It's up to us to manage our time, to give ourselves moments of rest, enjoy a pleasant visit with a friend, savour the silence or take a moment alone for inner reflection. A little like Martha and Mary in the Gospel, who took pleasure in the presence of the Lord, each in her own way. Or like Zacchaeus who, listening to his inner voice, climbed up the sycamore tree to see Jesus pass by, giving Jesus the chance to invite himself into his home.

Come down quickly, I must stay at your house today (Lk 19:5.6). What a surprising and touching invitation! As a tax collector, Zacchaeus selfishly collected his dues and exploited his fellow citizens, yet he gladly welcomed and dined with Jesus. This intimate moment with Jesus was fruitful. Zacchaeus realized that deep in his heart was goodness, openness and generosity. What a beautiful discovery for him! His self-esteem certainly rose, because listening to the Lord brings pleasant surprises.

At the school of Jesus, our young Sisters (scholastics) learn to manage their time. They try to have intimacy with the Lord and live interculturally with respect, openness to others while sharing daily tasks. It is a time for spiritual renewal and in-depth integration of the missionary spirit of Thanksgiving, thus preparing them for their perpetual vows.

This is how Sisters Gisèle and Lise devote themselves to the nation of Haiti. Sister Gisèle, who is responsible for the publication of the magazine *Ti-Moun Misoyne*, visits primary school classrooms and suggests religious and mission activities for the students. Sister Lise prepares young people for a profession in nursing at the Catholic University of Hinche, a profession in which selflessness, devotion and love of neighbour are essential. Training these young people is a great success, as they are now ready to help relieve human suffering.

The Montreal Chinese Catholic Mission celebrated 100 years since their foundation. An occasion to thank the Lord, to celebrate and to share with those devoted to their cause. A procession in the streets of Chinatown, Montreal demonstrated their joy and their Quebecois pride.

All the articles in this issue speak of love, joy and the happiness which comes in serving others. Take the time to read them and allow yourself to be charmed by these moments of reflection. The Lord will come to you and feel at home in your heart.

Happy reading!

Marie-Paula Sanjeon, m.i.c.



Zacchaeus, Come Down!

To walk in a protest from time to time is insufficient, although necessary;
we must walk every day to find what we are truly searching for.



By André Gadbois

Towns, cities and sometimes even villages are more frequently becoming places of mass demonstrations, as much to celebrate something as to denounce it, and to show the power of human solidarity. Added to these gatherings is the presence of social media, where the speed at which our opinions are shared is astonishing. We could conclude that communication between individuals is going smoothly. So much the better! Yet, loneliness and discouragement are ravaging us, injustice and contempt continue to “kill.” On every continent!

Too often, the modern world resembles a car without a driver. The media shows us as much beauty as they do horror, and they try to make us aware, but they always seem to return to the same images. The lyrics to a song have been stuck in my mind and in my heart: *When men will live by love, there will be no more misery... then these will be beautiful days.*

Has happiness left Earth? What does it take to get your hands on it? Is it reserved for only a few privileged people who know how to grab it when it comes and give it out according to their own good will? According to Seneca, *There is no favourable wind for those who do not know where*

¹ BEAUCHAMP, André,
Devenir voyage,
Fides 2017, p.126

² LENOIR, Frédéric,
Du Bonheur (French
only), Publisher: Fayard-
paperback P. 113

they are going. Are the monks and nuns in their monastery happier than the citizens who sit in traffic on their way to work or pay taxes? Is it true that certain people are made for happiness more than others...? As they say, you reap what you sow!

Is it true that certain people are made for happiness more than others...?

GOD'S PURPOSE

Luke (19:1.10) tells us that Jesus, while crossing the city of Jericho, saw a very wealthy, curious man named Zacchaeus sitting in a sycamore tree. He was rich since he was the chief tax collector. Jesus saw him and invited himself to his home, in front of a scandalized crowd. Come down to your house, Zacchaeus, come down and look into your inner self. During their meal, Zacchaeus realized that he had never worried that the citizens saw him as a money-collecting machine, and that he never gave back to those in need. Before leaving, Jesus told Zacchaeus that today salvation had come

to his home, *for it is God's purpose to worry about men, beginning with those who suffer injustice.*¹

WORKING ON YOURSELF, EVERY DAY

What remains on the sidewalk, in the street, at school, after our noisy and necessary demonstrations, after our opinions posted on social media, after our renewed Eucharists? Is it not every day, as did the Jewish people in the desert and the Prophet from Nazareth, that we must journey on? It's in our daily choices that our life takes form, that it must be oriented, and that it must have meaning and a purpose, because it's in our every day life that happiness is created. And in the march forward, the Sabbath should not be neglected because our heart and soul need that rest to move forward on a daily basis. Zacchaeus was consumed by money and power; he bred hatred and sparked division in his city.

Jesus welcomed Zacchaeus and renewed him; he supported him in re-orienting his life, in his search for new meaning and a reason to live. Jesus surely felt the joy of saving what seemed lost.

*Can you be happy in an unhappy world? I say yes, without hesitation: a hundred times yes, because happiness is contagious.*² ∞

Yes to you, Jesus

*as you offer me your love
as you encourage my transparency
as you desire my all
as you continue my transformation
as you bless my giftedness
as you catch me up in your arms
as you take who I am
into your loving embrace.*

*as you letter my life with yourself
as you ask for my honesty
as you speak through all I do
as you challenge my weaknesses
as you fire me with your truth
as you seal me with your goodness
as you bless me with the blessing
that only the Father can give.*¹

¹ RUPP, Joyce - *Fresh Bread*, Ave Maria Press, 1999

Challenged by the diversity of churches



To create a new union with our Mother Earth, Sister Pauline sees the importance and urgency in taking responsibility for the environment. Committed to the Green Churches, an interfaith movement to save the planet, she is also interested in Christian traditions that will lead her on a journey of interreligious and monotheistic dialogue in Jerusalem.



By Pauline Boilard, M.I.C.

During a community meeting, I was invited to speak on the diversity of the Churches with whom I am in regular contact. First the Green Churches in Quebec, as well as those in Jerusalem, where I had the opportunity to live and get involved with the movement for a year. Firmly believing we all have the same Father, the diversity of Churches fascinates me, as well as other religions. Consequently, I am often invited to speak on the topic.

WHAT ARE GREEN CHURCHES?

Like many of us, the colour in the name struck me, and I thought at first that it was a joke. But since then, I've come to learn that there is no joking when it comes to the importance and urgency of the environmental movement. Green Churches¹ are interfaith and come from Christian traditions: Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and

Protestant. Within these faith traditions, groups of people have decided to take a collective interest in environmental issues. These issues concern everyone, and have become a project to work on together in an ecumenical way. The website for Green Churches presents these groups individually: youth centres, parishes and religious communities which, like ours, through their provincial and local chapters, support houses in their effort to join the global environmental movement in favour of a common Home. It was helpful that the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism guided these groups until 2015, when the network became a non-profit organization. In 2016, where it all began, more than 60 groups celebrated their tenth anniversary at the *Community Centre of the United Church of Canada*. This celebration marked an occasion to renew our commitment to change our ways of thinking, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, create a new union with the earth, reflect on our spirituality and hear the cries of both the Earth and the poor. The mission and vision of Green Churches is education, spirituality and action.

¹ www.eglisesvertes.ca

PHOTOS:

¹ An ecumenical gathering

² Book written by Sr. Pauline

Photos Credit: P. Boilard

INTERRELIGIOUS TRIP TO JERUSALEM

Thanks to my regular participation in the Judo-Christian discussions at the *Emanu-El-Beth Sholom* Temple in Montreal, I was invited to participate in an interreligious and monotheistic dialogue in Jerusalem, a project launched by the University of Montreal, in June 2006.

DIALOGUE ON PEACE

When our group entered Jerusalem at night, by the Jaffa Gate, near the Tower of David, it was natural for us to remember psalm 121/122: *Finally, our feet are standing at your gates, Jerusalem. May there be peace within your walls.* Our sacred texts never cease to take on new facets. Initially overwhelmed, our exchanges at the small hotel Gloria focused on the experiences of twenty groups working for peace in the Palestinian and Israeli regions. We found brothers and sisters in the faith, all imaginative, dynamic, courageous and persevering. At this point in the process, we Westerners, with our feelings and our inaccurate vision of the world, questioned ourselves deeply and painfully. Did we have prejudices? This is an ongoing question.

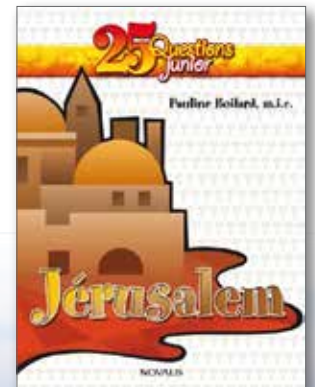
AN UNEXPECTED IMPLICATION

Partly thanks to the contacts I made through this trip, two years later I received an invitation to go to the secretariat of the Dominicans *École*

biblique et archéologique française in the Palestinian territory of Jerusalem. My challenge was to defend the right to entry and to residence in Jerusalem for the students who were international researchers. Week after week, for a year, the Israeli secretaries who welcomed me to the government centre had major concerns about responding to their bosses' instructions but also considering my requests. Perhaps I was a stranger to them, but I was also determined to reach my goal. Setting our differences aside, we were able to sympathize with each other, thanks to our mutual willingness to serve.

PUBLICATION OF A REVIEW BOOK

Eager to keep in touch with the fast-paced reality of life, I pursue the dialogues here and abroad. I also wrote, in collaboration with Novalis publishers, a small book under the title: *Jérusalem, une petite ville avec un grand destin.* The book is an attempt to synthesize centuries of history to reveal the symbolic value of the city, as well as its socio-cultural heritage. I am therefore pleased to offer you, students and teachers in programs of ethics and religious culture, a very simple tool of mutual understanding toward a pacified humanity. ☺



2



The Progress of *Ti-Moun Misoy nè*



Sr. Gisèle with a group of Ti-Moun Misoy nè / Photo Credit: MIC

Since Pope John Paul II's visit to Haiti on March 9, 1983, a need for religious education activities has been felt, especially for the children of Haiti. So we created the magazine Ti-Moun Misoy nè, which has grown considerably since its first publication.

By Gisèle Vachon, M.I.C.

THE MISSIONARY AWAKENING

In Haiti, several movements already existed for children, like *The Eucharistic Crusades*, and *The Scouts and Guides*, but there was nothing for *The Pontifical Missionaries Societies*. For this reason, some MIC Sisters decided to produce a small magazine for primary school students. The missionary awakening starts at a young age. A mascot like Zanmi Solèy helps capture the attention of children and encourage them, by example, to do good for those around them. From the first release, many schools were interested and small groups soon became *Ti-Moun Misoy nè*.

Today, this 24-page mission magazine, printed in colour, informs and trains the young Haitian children to be involved in the movement *Children*

Helping Children from around the world. More than 15,000 copies have been published, containing an activity that accompanies the catechism in schools. There is a section which includes children's songs, jokes, games and riddles which they love. Each issue has an Evangelical message and a mission for them. Teachers appreciate the content and use it to help children develop a sense of awareness of others because, even in poor countries, a child, despite his or her personal needs, must be open to others and remain aware of what is happening around the world.

A SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE

I'll tell you a story about the mascot Zanmi Solèy. Sister Lise Doucet, group leader for the southern coast of Haiti, told her students that Zanmi Solèy was coming to visit them. Sister Lise

disguised a young 14-year-old boy as the mascot and placed him in a small van, as if he was coming from the capital of Port-au-Prince. During recess, the car quietly entered the schoolyard. Wow! What delirious joy the students felt when they recognized Zanmi Solèy. After all the euphoria, Sister Lise took the opportunity to start an activity in which Zanmi Solèy responded to all the students' questions. It was a new way of learning, of discovering, of loving. A child, no matter the country he's from, is sensitive, spontaneous and appreciates pleasant surprises. An activity like that is memorable for life, and that's why it's important to continue publishing the magazine.

To all the people who have been helping us, we sincerely thank you for your donations on behalf of the children of Haiti, who have no other books to read other than those absolutely



Zanmi Solèy visiting the children / Crédit: MIC

essential for their studies. Even if the printing press in the Antilles collaborates, the schools still pay part of the subscription fee, and the children must also pay a little of their own money. ∞



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SOLIDARITY
AND
FIRST NATIONS

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Campaign

www.missioncheznous.com

Learning to Live Together

Mission chez nous* seeks to promote Christian solidarity with the native peoples.

Mission chez nous wishes to raise public awareness about Aboriginal realities; promote reconciliation, foster understanding between cultures, suppress prejudice and encourage dialogue. Help us to offer moral as well as material support to Canadian aboriginal communities.

* Mission chez nous set up by the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops in 1993 is a non-profit organization.

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The Religious World of Montreal



By Carole Guévin

The year 2017 marked the celebration of the 375th anniversary of Montreal's founding. The celebrations honoured the cultural diversity and rich history of the city, and were widely enjoyed by both citizens and tourists. The *Canadian Society of Catholic Church History* participated in the celebration by holding its 84th annual conference in Montreal on September 29th at Saint Joseph's Oratory, a well-known religious tourist attraction in Montreal.

The organizers of the conference reflected on the theme *The Religious World of Montreal: 375 Years of History*, addressing subjects such as the religious aspect of the city, missionary work and the evolution of religion. This symposium helped us better understand how religion contributed, and continues to contribute, to the Montreal identity, leaving a lasting impression. At its founding, Montreal was a place missionaries traveled to, and with time missionary endeavors were launched and took root.

The work of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate-Conception* as seen through the prism of MIC Mission News has been analysed by Audrey Charland under the theme: *MIC MISSION NEWS*,



OUR HISTORY FROM COVER TO COVER! In her vibrant account, the author helps readers discover the nuns' work within the Montreal community. She describes the world in which the MIC Sisters worked since 1920 in the fields of education, immigration, social ministry; she depicts their interethnic and intercultural relations, and the special role women had at that time. The magazines *Le Précurseur* (French edition) and *MIC Mission News* have been "precursory" tools for informing and raising awareness among the population.

You can read Audrey Charland's work online at:

www.pressemic.org

or request it by email:

communications@pressemic.org

PHOTO:

(left to right) Eric Desautels, Catherine Foisy, Audrey Charland communication and development agent for the MIC Missionary Press / Photo Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, m.i.c.



At The School of Jesus

At the dawn of their departure, I managed to get an interview with the five young women who shared, in recent seasons, a house next to the MIC convent. Despite the apparent tranquility of these nuns in formation, when the time came to return to their home country, we sensed something in their meditative silence and their laughter, a certain nostalgia and a touch of excitement lighting up their eyes and words. No doubt their stay at the school of Jesus adequately prepared them for the school of life. For them, the missionary life.





in church, interacting with them in school, meeting them during vocational activities or knowing them in a more personal way, these consecrated women, MIC or others, were admired as witnesses to the word of God, but also as actresses in their host community. Quickly, the future scholastics developed an ardent desire: to become *like them*. Their admiration seemed directed toward a specific thing, transcending both the words and actions of their elders... an irresistible attraction formed toward the pure and simple joy radiating out of these consecrated women. Although this happiness of living, and living for God, remained mysterious to the young, it was one

more reason to explore this path.

While for some it felt obvious that their steps should follow those of Mother Délia, for others, the way was not so clear, and perhaps even felt against their nature at first. At times it takes a helping hand to encourage us to take a big leap. We are always less fearful when we know that someone we love (brother, sister, priest or friend) is waiting for us on the shore, lifebelt in hand if we need it. Despite their hesitations or fears, the scholastics understood very early that what they had contemplated from afar for so long, was not actually frightening. Once they began to try what it was like, they confirmed their inclination toward the consecrated missionary life.

...FOR THE SEEDLING TO GROW...

As they were already rooted in their faith, I was curious to know what a stay in Quebec brought to their personal and vocational lives. Without a doubt, their experience in the small community in Pont-Viau was a memorable adventure. The term “adventure” is not an abuse of language here... Learning was often the culmination of hardships and challenges, both inwardly and environmentally. They had to adapt to a variety of new parameters at the same time as they



By Audrey Charland

A SINGLE SEED IS ENOUGH...

It would be futile to try and conceal the reality that the rate of entry into religious life in different congregations is declining. Nevertheless, in South America, Africa and Asia, the experience still seems to challenge young women. Among them, only a few will reach the final step of the perpetual profession. Sisters Émilienne, Marie-Émilienne, Katherine, Christine and Treazer became the winners in this obstacle course over the years.

Before reaching the end of the course, they had to decide to truly commit themselves. How then, in the 21st century, do we embody what is traditionally known as “the call”? The invitation takes as many forms as there are nuns! However, there are certain reasons these women have in common for pursuing this eternal role.

For many, during their childhood, nuns were role models. Seeing them

PHOTOS:

¹⁻² Perpetual vows of Sr. Katherine Brosio

³ Long-live internationality!

Photos Credit: MIC

were called to solidify their religious identity, brick by brick.

The workshops and discussions gave them an opportunity to examine their past and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Openness to oneself and others is key in this business, because taking a step back is not easy. That's why it's important to know yourself so you are able to share with others and, above all, give your own colour to Mother Délia's charism. Psychological and spiritual guides were also helpful in this journey.

This period of rest and recollection allowed these young women to reconnect with the source of their commitment. With the frenzy of the mission on the ground, where needs are calling from every direction at any moment, it is difficult to create an ideal climate in which to descend into one's own secret garden. Through their interaction with the wild and ever-changing nature of Quebec, the scholastics found the words of their Foundress echoing, words they so often heard without grasping their full intensity.

...AND RIPEN AT DAYBREAK.

The countdown is coming to an end. No more than a few days left on Canadian soil. A happy return is on the horizon, anticipated with a palpable excitement. Nevertheless, these five women will not return home with photographs in their suitcases or stories to tell, as if they've returned from vacation. No! They will return to their country with something greater than can be narrated or shown. We could say they have found a "precious pearl" within their inner being that is neither quantifiable or qualifiable.

Many analogies were used to explain the state of their spirits. For one of them, this renewal period allowed her to *see the world through a new pair of glasses*. For another, *the tank is full and she's ready to head out on her next mission*. These inspiring images open a crack in the experience of the



scholastics who are now ready for sharing and giving, for their missionary commitments.

What's more, in the course of their final training here in Canada, these scholastics had the privilege of speaking and interacting with Sisters who were once missionaries in their countries. Sharing with the elderly nuns, learning about their experiences brought about a bonding. We sense the strong feeling of belonging in their conversation, driven by the testimonies of love of neighbour. In spirit, they will remain in communion, despite geographical, cultural and generational distance.

In their image, these young women, very soon to be final professed nuns, will pass on the legacy left by Mother Délia. In turn, they will serve as role models for hundreds of girls and boys thirsty for justice, charity and faith. Through their living witness, they will embody the Word of God while remaining in tune with the times. We can only encourage them in the pursuit of their missionary vocation. ∞

A Crowning Achievement Worthy of Praise

Thirty-four young people ready to offer quality care. This is the result of four years of hard work at the college of nursing at the Catholic University of Hinche. Sister Lise and Sister Silfane invested hard work and love into the students' success. Congratulations to each one of these graduates and their professors!



By Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.

On July 7, 2017, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Hinche, the first graduation took place for students from *Notre Dame University of Haiti – Unité Diocésaine d'Études, de Recherches et de Services (UDERS)* in Hinche. On this great day, two faculties were honoured: the faculty of *nursing sciences* and the faculty of *medical biology*, the first in Haiti.

Since 2012, students have received integral training, which is one of the main objectives of the *Catholic University*. The road has not always been easy; it's the price you pay to begin work dedicated to human life. The small seed sown in the earth bears its first fruit. Sister Silfane Joseph and myself are happy to present these 34 young people who, in turn, can offer their Haitian brothers and sisters quality care worthy of humankind.

It's the crowning achievement after four years of training and practical internships, sometimes in difficult conditions, given the state of certain

PHOTO:

A group of graduates
Photo Credit: MIC



roads. During their fifth year of training, the graduates must produce and present a research project to a jury. The training ends next December, after which the students must pass State examinations to obtain their license.

On the morning of July 7th, the 9 a.m. ceremony began with the formal entry of our future nurses dressed in their uniforms. They themselves prepared and facilitated the Thanksgiving mass before the convocation. Monsignor Désinord Jean, Bishop of the diocese and president of UDERS, *Hinche*, Monsignor Pierre André Pierre, rector of the *Notre Dame University of Haiti (UNDH)*, Father Hérald Jean, the executive vice-rector of UDERS, *Hinche* and priest professors at UDERS co-celebrated the Eucharist, giving to the Lord the future of these young people.

After the prayerful and festive religious ceremony, the future graduates of both colleges put on their caps and gowns in the colours of their University: blue and yellow. The future nurses took the oath of Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of modern nursing. For Florence, the patient was the most important thing: a person living in an environment, hence the importance of the surroundings. Each graduate was called by her name and received her certificate, confirming that she had completed her training and fulfilled the requirements. The first recipient in the group deserved this mention for having been consistent in both academic and practical achievements, and the second deserved nothing less. Congratulations to each and every one!

Parents, friends, sisters and brothers from other grades, professors, internship leaders and members of the administration felt the good vibrations in the atmosphere and the satisfaction of the new graduates. The joy of those gathered on this day was worth all the effort and sacrifices of parents, benefactors, students and faculty. The day's celebration ended with the rector's speech and the thankful words of the graduates.

Certain students had a more difficult journey, given their parents' financial state. Here, allow me to thank you, dear readers of *MIC Mission News*, for your generosity in responding to a call—that of supporting our students and facilitating our ongoing work, as *UNDH* does not receive any grants from the State. We are grateful for your spirit of solidarity and sharing. Your donations allow us to

create indispensable materials and documents and occasionally give aid to young people in need. I'm thinking specifically of one of the graduates who nearly had to give up an important and mandatory internship for lack of financial means. Thank you! May your gesture bring you blessings of all kinds, for you and all your loved ones.

Live the present with passion, Pope Francis told us at the start of the Year of Consecrated Life (2015–2016). And it is with passion that we continue the work of training these young people in all the stages of their studies. Our way of living the Mission of Jesus today is to show them the joy and love of being with Him, bearer of Life.

This rewarding experience is lived within the circle of a team convinced of the nobility of this profession. *Do not forget that there will be lives entrusted to you*, the students are reminded throughout their training. And we tell them the words of our dear Pope Francis, *we look to the future with hope*. It goes without saying that the future is perhaps uncertain if we think about the present condition of the Haitian people, but the future sees signs of hope if we remember these young people who *want to make a difference*. Some of them have already found work suitable to their training; others continue with the hope they will be useful to their people.

For us, missionary disciples in the service of Life, we continue to proudly carry the torch of our profession. In the footsteps of our Venerable Mother Délia and Mary of the Magnificat, we try to communicate the best we can our faith in God present in every person and our passion for Life and life in abundance! 🍷

With Sister Lise, I am contributing to the future of these young Haitians, with a cheque for:

\$_____

I make the cheque out to:

PROCURE DES MISSIONS
Project: UDERS, Hinche, Haiti

121 Avenue Maplewood
Montreal (QC) H2V 2M2
CANADA



A traditional dance

Photo Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Healing African Dance

By Ruth Christine Nyalazi, M.I.C.

I never really participated closely in the rituals of my people nor in those around my village. But I remember when I was young I went to watch people who were possessed by the spirits, perform the ritual dances. I also encountered another situation: when someone is sick people believe it's because the spirits are not happy, so they will call the spirits to heal the person and ask forgiveness if there is an offence. As observed, those who are possessed by the spirits in my culture, spend long hours by themselves in silence in a house or in the bush away from people, in the presence of light and higher gods. Usually after three days, they return to the village or open their house and the one accompanying them organizes the healing dance for them in order to dance out the bad spirits (vimbuza) for Tumbukas, (mashawe) for Nsengas of Zambia, after which they are healed. This is something we can't understand and many questions remain without answers. But I believe there is something sacred about this. The healers may not be able to articulate with human words their connectedness with a felt mystical power but surely they know how to connect with nature and its sacred language.

SPIRITUALITY

More and more we discover through the Spirit that everything is sacredly sustained by God's Spirit. In his book, *A Shamanic Theology of Sacred Sustainability*, Jojo Fung¹ acknowledges that life abounds in the forest, in the rivers, in the soil, in the all-ness of life. I believe that the retreat into silence for the spirit possessed people, makes them listen beyond their pain and suffering; it gives them a sense of life's goodness, the fact being that most of these sick women have many problems. In the Gospel of Matthew (8:28ff), Jesus encounters the demoniacs. I reflected on their condition: they are in pain, they feel rejected, life has no meaning for them and the presence of Jesus frightens them. They ask Him, what do you want from us, have you come to torture us? Jesus hears their distress, He takes care of their pain and gives them back their dignity as human beings. Thus they return with joy and thanksgiving. This is the sacred dance of a healed soul. Jojo Fung affirms that life is mystical and sacred. Life is full of mystery, the unknown and known, the seen and the unseen. I have come to grasp over the years that we know very little about nature. Thus valuing nature as sacred, I learn to value human life in its sacredness. We are called each day to reflect on this sacredness within our own lives.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

While in Canada, in the fall of 2006, I experienced a health problem. I felt devastated with the fact that because of this health condition I would never be the same again. I decided to take time away from everything and everyone. I went

to Ermitage Ste. Croix for a six days retreat in silence. One day, as I was wrestling with negative ideas, I suddenly had a clear inner vision. Within me, a powerful energy was dancing in a circular motion and was transforming me. I felt a deep joy, a sacred space was being formed within me. I then grasped that it was a symbol of the freedom of letting go and allowing God to fill my whole being. I had nothing anymore to hold on to but to let go. Then, I heard the words of Jeremiah, *"The Lord gave, the Lord has taken, and blessed be the name of the Lord"*. This was a sacred moment, one that would sustain me for years to come and help me face my creative loneliness.

MISSION

This profound experience awakened in me a reality: the healing ministry through spiritual direction. It is a ministry that requires all the positive sources of energy that transform pain into joy, anger into peace, death into life, hopelessness into hope and sadness into happiness. A presence that heals,

that gives a hundred reasons to live again and again in the face of daily deaths. This energy is around and within us. We are not alone, we have the support of our God and our intercessors the ancestors. Tapping into this energy in the universe means opening oneself fully to the working of the Holy Spirit who blows the breath of life through nature and everything around us. Then we can let others experience the God of the dance. This is the experience of the resurrection. HE IS ALIVE! 



Ruth Christine Nyalazi, M.I.C.
Photo Credit: MIC

¹FUNG, Jojo M., SJ – A Shamanic Theology of Sacred Sustainability, Jesuit Communications Foundation, Inc. 2014



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Procession in the streets of Chinatown / Photo Credit: Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

Montreal Chinese Catholic Mission

100 Years of History

When celebrating a centennial, past years are often remembered. The first Chinese immigrants arrived in Montreal in 1860; they participated in building the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1901, immigration increased and an estimated 888 Chinese were already in Montreal. These immigrants grouped together and created a Chinatown; eleven years later there were more than 1,300 Chinese in the area.



By Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

LASTING TIES WITH THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

In 1913, just four years after the first missionaries were sent to China, Délia Tétreault, Foundress of the MIC Institute turned toward the Chinese in Montreal; she had been asked to begin a Sunday School for the Chinese immigrants. It is at *The Chinese School of the Holy Spirit*, that the MIC Sisters began

teaching the basics of Catholicism. Concerned about the future of the Chinese children, Délia obtained permission from the Montreal School Board to open the first Chinese school in 1916. Fifteen years later it closed due to the fact that many Chinese families were returning to China.

In 1918, when the Spanish flu epidemic broke out in Montreal, Délia received permission to open a small emergency refuge for the Chinese community on Clark Street. In 1920, with the financial help of Chinese merchants, a hospital was organized and opened its doors at 112 de la

Gauchetière Street in Chinatown. After 42 years of existence, the building was condemned. A fund raising campaign was launched and its success allowed the hospital to move to new premises on St. Denis Street. Years later, in 1999, an old dream became a reality: the Montreal Chinese Hospital returned to the heart of the Chinese community on Viger Street and now has a capacity of 128 beds.¹ Since 2015, the hospital is part and parcel of the integrated university Health and Social Services Centre (CIUSSS). Throughout the years, 1931 to 1986, the MIC Sisters collaborated closely in developing the Montreal Chinese Catholic Mission; nowadays, the Sisters continue participating in certain activities.

A GREAT CELEBRATION IN THE MONTREAL CHINATOWN

Officially invited to the Chinese Catholic Mission's centennial celebration, Sr. Cecilia Hong, Sr. Celia Chua, and Sr. Monica Lam attended the feast. An entertaining historical presentation summarized the different development stages of the Montreal Chinese Mission, its school and hospital. Power-point projections, music and dances captured everyone's attention. For the occasion, a Centennial Mass took place at the parish church; around the altar were six priests who concelebrated in English, French and Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin). Afterwards, a festival parade dance of the golden dragon led a procession of priests, religious and parishioners across the Chinatown area; the two lions one in red, the other in gold danced their way through the crowd representing the complicity and friendliness which exists between the Chinese who speak Mandarin and those who speak Cantonese. A heartwarming applaud rose from the crowd as the two lions ended their dance embracing each other.

During the banquet dinner, some senior parishioners gave special tribute to significant pastors and religious Sisters who had dedicated their life for the Chinese Mission. Especially mentioned were: Father Thomas Tou who had served sixty years at the parish and also our belated Sister Charlotte Duhamel for her special love and devotion to the Chinese. The PME Fathers were also honored for their contribution as pastors.

On behalf of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception* the MIC Sisters who attended

the Centennial Feast, presented to Fr. Joseph Liu, pastor of the Chinese Catholic Mission, a replica painting of Venerable Délia Tétreault with two companions and children of different nationalities. The artist, Mr. Pierre Lussier, beautifully represented the Chinese population and his masterpiece is exposed at the chapel entrance of St. Anne-de-Beaupré.



Cardinal J. Zen, from Hong Kong / Photo Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

GUESTS FROM HONG KONG

On September 21, Cardinal Joseph Zen, emeritus Bishop of Hong Kong came to visit his long-time friend, Sr. Marie-Thérèse Beaudette, M.I.C., in Laval, QC. He was accompanied by Fr. Joseph Ng, Salesian priest from Hong Kong, and Fr. Joseph Liu. A few parishioners came with their pastor to thank the MIC Sisters for their enduring commitment to the Chinese Catholic Mission.

After dinner, Cardinal Zen spoke about the relations between the Vatican and the Chinese government. A great defender of democracy, human rights, and political as well as religious freedom, he asked us to pray for China and its millions of Catholics who are perplexed concerning their religious allegiance. His message was most touching and revived our desire to pray for all those who struggle for their faith. 🙏

¹ GAUTHIER, Chantal, *Women Without Frontiers*, Carte Blanche Edition 2008, P. 330



Sr Denise / Crédit: M.-P. Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

On the Road With Denise

Sister Denise Duhamel is back from Africa after 35 years of mission work. She is now our designated “chauffeur” and drives our Sisters to their medical appointments. The Montreal and Laval hospitals have no more secrets for her. Early in the morning until late at night, she goes about her business as she has always done. I am happy to present you this dauntless woman.



By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Sr. Marie-Paule: Briefly, tell me Denise, how were you touched by God's grace to become a missionary?

Sr. Denise: It's quite a long story. Originally from Granby, Quebec, I studied at Holy Family School which was run by the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*. I greatly admired Sr. Marie-Paule Michaud who was my teacher. Later, she was sent to Magnito, Cuba and I had the opportunity of visiting her; one of my aunts planned to go there and needed someone to drive her while in Cuba. During our

stay over of forty-eight hours, I had the chance to admire the mission work of the Sisters and meet Sr. Marie-Paule. After some time, I went back to Cuba, it is then that I felt called to the missionary life. Upon my return, I decided to go on a retreat and as I drove back the retreat master, he said to me: *Stop asking yourself what the Lord wants of you, rather, ask yourself what you want to give to the Lord.* That was the “key” statement that made me decide. However, I did have a certain fear: my father had a dancing hall in Granby, located at the *Vieux Moulin* where I played the trumpet. I was sure that I would not be admitted in religious life because of my involvement in such a worldly place, but to my surprise, I was accepted.

Sr. Marie-Paule: Tell me about your mission in Africa. I know you have many talents, but what was your main occupation?

Sr. Denise: In 1965, while in Malawi, I was really jack of all trades: I went from cooking, to building maintenance, especially the schools; I contributed in building a rest house at Nkatabe, near Lake Malawi, I taught music to young girls. When I was young, I learned to play the trumpet by myself, I imitated my father. As of the age of twelve, that instrument followed me everywhere. I was fascinated by the trumpet's three piston valves which produced an extraordinary sound.

At Marymount Secondary School, in Malawi, a boarding school for girls, I organized a band called THE MERRY BAND. We practiced once or twice a week as part of the MUSIC CLUB. On certain occasions, the boys from another secondary school would join us and we would give concerts, this was a delight for all the students. An embassy and a parish offered us wind instruments. Such a gift was greatly appreciated as it awakened the youth to the beauty of music and a greater number of students could participate in the band.

Sr. Marie-Paule: Can you tell us what impressed you the most while in Malawi?

Sr. Denise: What struck me the most was the poverty and seeing the great number of children unable to go to school; that hurt me deeply because I was close to the youth. I wondered what kind of future they could have without schooling.

During the rainy season, grass in the school yard grew rapidly. Sickles in hand, the youth would help me cut and clear the grounds; this was a perfect opportunity to know them better. If not weakened by a period of drought, the Malawians are courageous and work with all their might. I saw and encouraged men construct a road many kilometers long and all they had in hand was a pickaxe. They transported the sand and bricks by hand, they had no motorized equipment. You have to be valiant to do such hard work.

Sr. Marie-Paule: After such a mission experience in Africa, what do you hold dear in your heart?

Sr. Denise: Among other things, a marvelous souvenir! At the Kanyanga hospital, we had no running water and had to go fetch it in barrels of 45 gallons. What a job! We asked a water diviner



Kanyanga, (left to right) Sr. Jacqueline Vachet, Sr. Denise / Photo Credit: MIC

to come over and see if it were possible to dig a well. Yes, it was possible! When the water came gushing out, I can still see a dozen children and adults, hopping and dancing, smiling and laughing with joy. For me, this was one of the most rewarding experiences. What happiness there is in giving joy! Isn't water essential to life?

Sr. Marie-Paule: Here, in Quebec, what is your greatest challenge as a driver?

Sr. Denise: I have been driving since the age of twelve. At my uncle's farm, I drove an old Buick to harvest hay. It was not complicated: forward, backward. Later, I learned to drive a car and took the road. With my aunt, I was behind the wheel in a Cadillac in the streets of Miami, Florida. In Africa, I drove a pick-up truck on dirt roads and supervised the construction work. Ever since my return from Africa, I have been driving the Sisters to their medical appointments, and to hospitals. I like to render this service, traffic does not bother me. I am calm even when I must drive a Sister to the emergency. I ask someone to accompany her and usually I take streets that have less traffic or too many orange cones. I thank the Lord for my good vision, my quick reflexes, and a safe car to help me remain faithful to my task.

Sr. Marie-Paule: I wish you, dear Denise, many more years behind the wheel; it's a service greatly appreciated and it is now your mission. Thank you for your availability, your dedication and love of your Sisters. ~

With You, O Lord



Françoise Derome, M.I.C.
(Sr. Françoise-de-Rome)
1926-2017
Paris, France

Her life had so many twists and turns that Sister Françoise chose as motto: *One day at a time!* In 1948, Françoise entered our Novitiate and pursued her studies in nursing. Appointed to Haiti she worked at the *Albert Schweitzer Hospital*. Upon her return in 1964, Sr. Françoise went beyond her nursing career and specialized in hospital administration. This led her to take the direction of the new *Chinese Hospital* in Montreal. In 1976, she assumed the responsibility of our infirmary – *Escale Myriam* and in 1988, she was called upon to manage the Human Resources Department of the *MIC Health Care Services*. The quality of her human relations and her professionalism were admired by all. Thank you Sr. Françoise for your unfailing dedication.



Françoise Florisina, M.I.C.
1959-2017
Belo-sur-Tsiribihina,
Monrondava, Madagascar

Blessed by her paternal grandmother who brought her up in the Catholic faith and with blessings from her parents, Sister Françoise entered our Novitiate in Antsirabe, in 1981. With courage, she went through the different stages of her religious formation years. Her desire to be a missionary “ad extra” led her to take appropriate academic courses which prepared her for a mission in Zambia, Africa. Notwithstanding her frail health, she was most dedicated as a nurse, a teacher, a catechist, and as counsellor of the MIC aspirants. Sister Françoise went out of her way to educate and empower women. Her profound faith, joyful spirit, and perseverance crowned her short life at 58. Our gratitude to you, dear Sister.



Vivencia V. Paña, M.I.C.
(Sr. Marie de la Croix)
1936-2017
Baybay, Leyte, Philippines

Do more for God! We could find this watermark in Sister Vivencia's life. Attentive to God's calling, she wanted to serve—but where? Her Marian devotion was a beam showing her the way. On May 1, 1961, she entered our Novitiate in Baguio, Philippines. Vivencia came from a faith-filled family and though she was the youngest, she learned to give. Her dream to be a missionary abroad became reality: in Malawi, Africa and later in Madagascar she taught for a number of years. She lived her leitmotiv to *do more for God* when she was appointed Director of Stella Maris School in Davao; was a team member of the MIC formation in Baguio; and in charge of the Mission Animation Center. With serenity, Sr. Vivencia received her medical verdict and was welcomed by her beloved Lord on July 24, 2017. With you Sister, we sing the Magnificat.



Noëlla Parent, M.I.C.
(Sr. Sainte-Éléonore)
1926-2017
St-Ambroise-de-Kildare,
Québec

A Christmas gift for her parents, Noëlla was the fourth child of nine children. In her writings we find that events fashioned her life: the discovery of the Divine presence within her and that of Mary, her confidant. She discovered her teaching talent, as well as her love for the Holy Childhood, and the Catholic Agricultural Youth (JAC French). She also discovered the beauty of religious life. Well prepared, Sr. Noëlla entered our Novitiate in 1948. Her numerous talents were an asset in Madagascar, in Haiti, and in Quebec. In 2011, it was a return to her homeland, Canada. Due to her declining health Sr. Noëlla was transferred to our health care unit; another learning experience which she accepted with patience. On August 10, 2017 the Lord called her HOME. May you be eternally happy dear Sister.



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