

MIC MISSION NEWS

VOL. 45, Nº 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2018 | \$5.00



To sow seeds of joy and hope

SINCE 1923

Canada

A Hope-filled
Harvest

Cuba

A Daring Hope

In Focus

*What Am I
Sowing?*



Missionary Prayer Intentions 2018

APRIL

The people responsible for the economy: That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

MAY

The Mission of the laity: That the lay faithful may fulfil their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

JUNE

Social networks: That social networks may work towards inclusiveness which respects others for their differences.

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**

CONTENTS

VOL. 45, N° 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2018

SPIRITUAL LIFE

4 Take Action – *André Gadbois*

CULTURES AND MISSION

6 The Hope of Harvest – *Éric Desautels*

YOUTH

8 Chinese Youth in Montreal – *Wilson Wong*

10 The Fantasies of God in Délia's Life – *Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.*

IN FOCUS: WHAT AM I SOWING?

11 A Dream of Liberation – *Maurice Demers*

14 Being Committed to a True Cause – *Carole Guévin, M.L.*

15 CAM-5 Project – Bolivia/Peru 2018 – *Audrey Charland*

16 Evangelization in Continental China – *Therese Peug, AsMIC*

ABOUT THE MICs

18 "Viva mi Patria Bolivia!" – *Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.*

20 A Daring Hope – *Jeanne Ostiguy, M.I.C.*

MIC Mission News

Mission magazine published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

Offices

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

Phone: (450) 663-6460
Fax: (450) 972-1512

E-mail:
micmissionnews@pressemic.org

Web sites:
www.pressemic.org
www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

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

Communication and Development Agent
Audrey Charland

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

Editorial Team
Audrey Charland
Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.
André Gadbois
Maurice Demers
Éric Desautels

Translation
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
Ghislaine LeFranc

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

Promotion
Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.

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

Accounting
Elmire Allary, M.I.C.

Layout & Design
Caron Communications graphiques

Printing
Solisco

Cover
Srs. Rose-Philomène Gédéon
and Kethelie Gard
Photo Credit: MIC

Subscription rates (4 issues):
Canada: 1 year - \$15, 2 years - \$25
U.S.A: 1 year - US \$20
International: 1 year - C \$30

Single issue:
\$5 (plus mailing costs)
Digital subscription: \$8

Member of the Catholic & Ecumenical Media Association

Tax Receipt
Registration Number:
NE 89346 9585 RR0001
Presse missionnaire MIC

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

Canada

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.

EDITORIAL

Have you ever seen a bougainvillea? It's a marvelous climbing plant which comes in a variety of colors. It is easy to grow and is a popular landscape in Haiti; the poor as well as the rich can decorate their property. It's free! How can it be propagated? From stem cuttings which are planted in the soil and watered, it's as simple as that. The stem takes root, grows, flowers and gives joy. Rain or shine, it is there for all to admire.

As Christians it is our duty to help God's Word take root and germinate in time. Like that young boy who had five small barley loaves and two small fish, little did he know

Roots of Hope

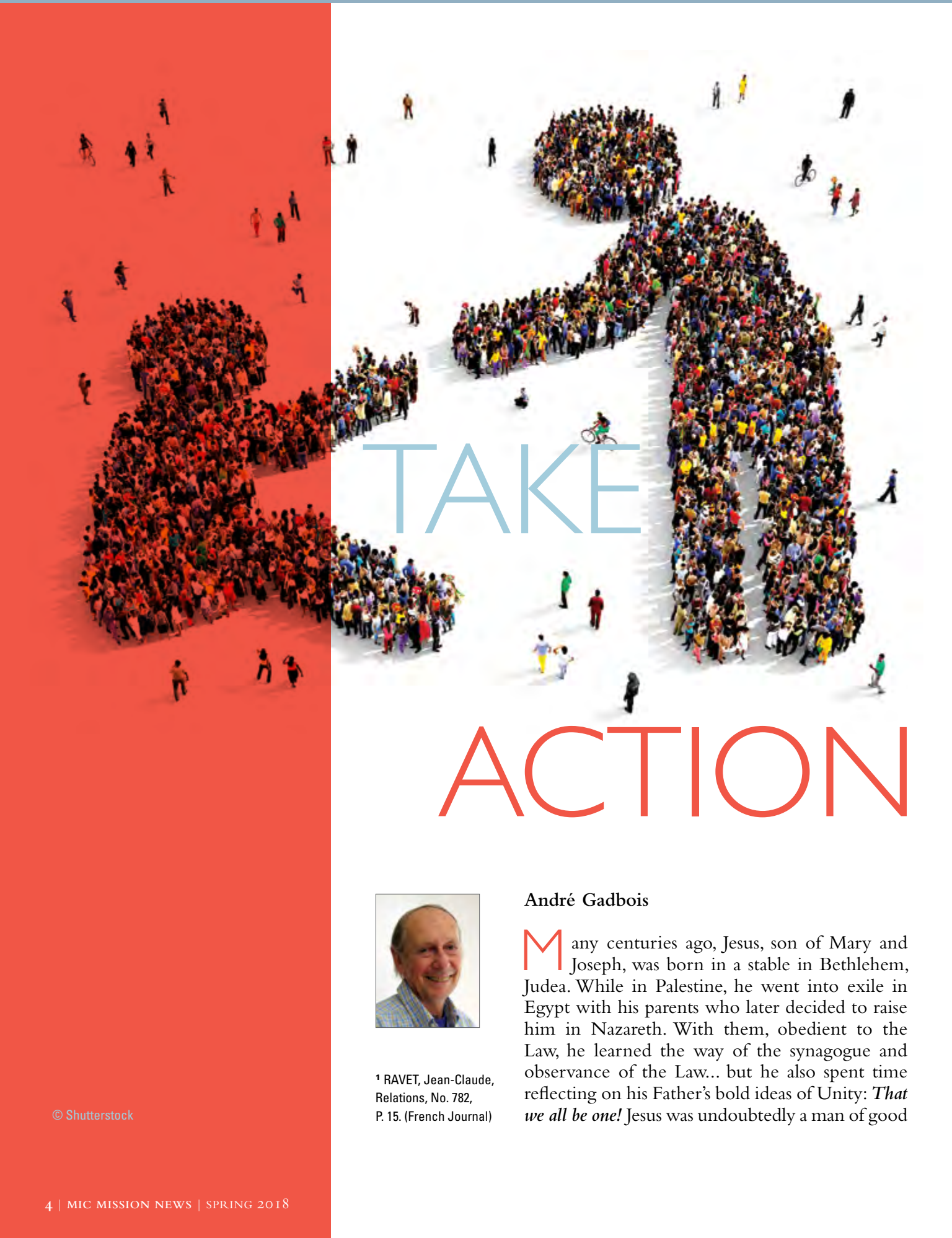
The bougainvillea could be compared to the Word of God. The missionary sows the Word and by the grace of God it takes root in the human heart. Lately, some missionaries from Taiwan went to mainland China and during their stay they observed how people still have the faith notwithstanding decades of revolution and persecution. Evangelization in China began in the XVIIth century. Christianity was introduced by the Jesuits and the secular priests of the *Paris Foreign Missions Society*. The Taiwan visitors were delighted to discover an active Church in the Diocese of Guangdong (Canton). The same wonder is happening in Cuba. Notwithstanding the Communist regime of Fidel Castro, faith is alive more than ever. Scripture does say: *The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow... It judges the thoughts and purposes of the heart* (Heb 4:12). Like the bougainvillea the Word of God, saturated with Sunlight, brings joy to the heart even to the poorest and gives strength to accept many trials. This is Christ's active presence in our hearts, it is the profound dynamic of the Gospel.

what the Lord would do with his modest offering; He gave food to a very large crowd of people (Jn 6: 1.15). How encouraging this is for us! The Lord also transforms our slightest good deeds into an invaluable source of life.

The articles in this issue help us reflect on the importance of our deeds, no matter how meager they are. The Lord blesses thoughtful and loving actions, he makes them flourish in abundance and touches the hearts of those in need.

With confidence, let us do good deeds and spread the Good News, God will know how to transform our modest sowing into a blooming plant.

Marie-Paule Sanjean, m.i.c.



TAKE

ACTION



André Gadbois

Many centuries ago, Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph, was born in a stable in Bethlehem, Judea. While in Palestine, he went into exile in Egypt with his parents who later decided to raise him in Nazareth. With them, obedient to the Law, he learned the way of the synagogue and observance of the Law... but he also spent time reflecting on his Father's bold ideas of Unity: *That we all be one!* Jesus was undoubtedly a man of good

¹ RAVET, Jean-Claude,
Relations, No. 782,
P. 15. (French Journal)

company, happy among his people, sometimes sad and shaken by things he saw or heard. As a shepherd, he sought to be a unifier, to bring everyone together as ONE; he loved to wander to different corners of his country and speak with people. Over the years, he noticed the humiliating submission of many of his fellow citizens under the cruel reign of those little kings blinded by their own interests; he witnessed many sick people who went untreated; children with no hope for the future and people afraid of expressing themselves freely. His heart was filled with pity for the masses he saw, for those tired and discouraged; they were like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). It was difficult for them to live life to the fullest when, day after day, they were exploited by those stronger than themselves and endlessly weakened by those clever tyrants who subjected citizens to their plans and laws. *The common world disappears when political freedom ceases, when everyone is sent back to their private lives... when common space is confiscated by tyrants... public debate is muzzled... when society is too busy to consume and produce.*¹

Jesus sought to gather the people like a hen gathers her chicks. Matthew, who was his close collaborator tells us of Jesus' wrath before the teachers of the law who tried to keep people from living their lives to the fullest. Jesus wanted the people to take control of their own lives: express themselves freely, seek justice, make political decisions, innovate, share, protest, envision a future together and be responsible builders of their world (Mt 23).

Refusing to abandon this project of unity and freedom which he took from his Father, Jesus formed a small motivated team which he sent *toward the lost sheep of his people* (Mt 10:6). Slowly and gradually, the sharing of bread and washing of each other's feet, serving rather than being served, became the mark of this small group. They sought to teach their fellow citizens how to feel the joy of taking control of their own lives.

The leaders of that time had implemented structures of domination that kept people from enjoying the Life offered by the Father; this also prevented people from asserting their own talents. Jesus and his followers began to visit people, rid them of fear, nourish their self-confidence,

straighten their bent backs... Jesus persevered in his fundamental orientation: to open paths that would allow each person to take Life into their own hands. Some believed that Jesus' efforts were ended when he was crucified, but the Father gave new life to this saving project. A new strength and spirit spread over those who wanted to continue to love the world beyond the differences that existed, to act against conformism and to refuse the submission of many to a few.

THE SPIRIT OF JESUS, THE RISEN ONE... PROVIDES NOURISHMENT TO THOSE WHO STRIVE TO REBUILD HUMANITY WHERE IT HAS BEEN DISFIGURED.

It is not easy to go to those who are hurting daily and to support them so they may have their own happy life moving forward. Yet, despite what seems to be apparently discouraging, the Spirit of Jesus, the Risen One, continues its work around the world and provides nourishment to those who strive to rebuild humanity where it has been disfigured. The Spirit is with those who have long given their lives to the exploited, humiliated and voiceless. The Spirit of Jesus is with the missionaries and community workers who double their efforts to create an environment of dignity and respect in forgotten cities, towns and neighbourhoods.

Jesus sought to realize the dream and will of his Father: That we all be one! Let us give thanks for all those who fight for unity while respecting the cultures of all peoples. ∞



THE HOPE OF HARVEST

What fruits did they harvest, and how, with time, did their initial expectations change? These are some of my questions.

LE PRÉCURSEUR/MIC MISSION NEWS – ILLUSTRATES THIS HOPE OF HARVEST

Regular readers of *Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News* will surely recognize the image chosen for the cover of the magazine between the 1920s and 1950s. We could admire John the Baptist designating Jesus Christ as the Messiah to his disciples. The immense field of wheat in the background symbolizes the harvest promised to the servants of Christ who accepted exile. A rosary and bouquets of maple leaves frame the image, illustrating the Canadian origins of the Congregation. This powerful image showed the Sisters' hope to reap the fruits of their labour.

WHAT DID THE MISSIONARIES WANT TO SOW?

As early as 1919, a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception sent to China would associate harvest with the hope of converting: *Despite deprivations, in the field of the apostolate, we experience consolations*, evoking the thousands of baptisms in the crowded crèches of Canton.¹ Throughout so many years, what were the real motivations of the missionaries who worked in a difficult climate with very few means? Referencing the Holy Scriptures of the apostolic workers, it reads: *They go, they go weeping, carrying and spreading seed to grow; they return with songs of joy, carrying their sheaves from the harvest* (Psalm 126).² The hope of converting heathens and achieving their mission of evangelization was certainly the main motivation driving the Nuns at the beginning of the 20th century.



Éric Desautels is a PhD candidate in the department of Humanities at Concordia University's Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture.

Éric Desautels

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Mt 9:37); these are the words that inspired a missionary Sister whom I met recently to take her perpetual vows. Yet this harvest is impossible without the seed and the labourers who work hard to make the land fertile.

When we sow seeds, we always hope the harvest will be good, despite bad weather, unforeseen circumstances or unsuspected dangers. Sometimes, the person who sows has not yet adapted his knowledge and beliefs to the new land and, when it is arid, it does not help the crop flourish. This analogy works well when considering the missionary activity of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate-Conception*. Based on some of the testimonials I found in the pages of *Le Précurseur* since 1920 (French edition of the *MIC Mission News*), I hope to show that sometimes arid land changes the way we need to sow in order to produce a bountiful harvest. What were the initial reasons the Sisters went abroad?

PHOTOS:

¹ *Le Précurseur*, Vol. 1-No. 9, 1922

² Baptism in China

³ Sr. Céline Bourbeau in Japan

Photos Credit:
MIC Archives



However, when they arrived on new land, many Sisters realized that they needed to go further, sowing the missionary spirit and Christian values all while helping the poor. To act this way was to hope for a lasting harvest.

GOING BEYOND CONVERSION

Upon her arrival in China in 1920, Sister Marie-Louise Gosselin (religious name: Sr. Saint Anne), soon realized that priorities had to be beyond conversion: *Ah! If there had not been a Tower of Babel... and thereafter, no confusion of language, we could immediately work to make the good God known.*³ The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate-Conception quickly realized that adapting to other cultures and helping those most in need would be their greatest challenge. Sister Marie-Louise, later on a mission in Taiwan, explained that the needs of the local people for doctors and schools were as immediate as conversion.⁴

Let's consider another example of Sister Céline Bourbeau who, after a few years in Japan in the early 1970s, quickly realized the true role of Catholic schools. Beyond the growing conversions and baptisms, it was important to *lay a foundation, to create a Christian mentality* (that is, *to infuse people with the Christian spirit*).⁵ She added: *If we awaken in young people a sense of responsibility, a concern for others, an admiration... are we not preparing the earth for the seed?*⁶ It is this Christian spirit that allows the harvest to grow.

Finally, one last example of a harvest that grew much larger than originally anticipated: In 2002, as part of an article by Sister Céline Bourbeau on the laity in missions, there is mention of the seeds planted by Délia Tétreault at the start of the 20th century, when she opened the door to the laity's commitment. The result was: *a tree has grown and spread its branches far and wide*⁷. Many lay people are now committed to building universal solidarity in collaboration with religious communities.

THE HOPE OF HARVEST: THE HEART OF THE APOSTOLIC VOCATION

In conclusion, this brief overview shows important dimensions of missionary activity throughout the 20th century. First, to sow was to spread the love of God. Braving the winds and the seas, the missionary Sisters shared Christian values as well as the true spirit of mutual aid and international solidarity. If they embarked with ideas of conversion in mind, their desire to better the social conditions of women and children soon became a priority. Working on unknown lands with unknown people, the Sisters have shown their adaptability and openness to establish a true missionary spirit that can survive, whether in secular or religious forms. In my humble opinion, this is the most lasting fruit of the missionary activities abroad.

Throughout the pages of *Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News*, begun in 1920/23, the hope of seeing buds and flowers emerge from the impossible is at the heart of the missionary history. 🌸

¹ A missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception, "De Montreal à Canton," *Le Précurseur* - Vol. 1 - No. 1, May, 1920 - P. 11 (French edition only). ² Ibid., p. 13. ³ Sr. Marie-Louise Gosselin, (religious name: Sr. Saint Anne), "Letter from Sister Saint Anne, Missionary of the Immaculate-Conception in Manchuria, to her former Superior", *The Precursor* - Vol. VII - No. 2, March-April, 1930 - P. 83. ⁴ Marie Louise Gosselin, M.I.C., "People of Taiwan's Mountains", *The Precursor* - Vol XXVIII - No. 8, March-April, 1969 - P. 295-297. ⁵ Sister Céline Bourbeau, M.I.C., "Les trois (Mu)", *Le Précurseur* - Vol. 28 - No. 4, July-August 1974 - P. 106. (French edition only). ⁶ Ibid., p. 108. ⁷ Sister Céline Bourbeau, M.I.C., "A Vigorous Tree", *MIC Mission News* - Vol. 29 - No. 1, January-March 2002 - P. 4.

1



CHINESE YOUTH IN MONTREAL

2



and white photo where we see a group of Sisters standing in front of a ship. It reminds us of the missionary departures of yesteryear, such as the one shown on the picture: six nuns departing for Canton, China on September 8, 1909. This date marks the beginning of the MIC Sisters' mission work abroad and at that time they bravely accepted leaving without ever returning to their homeland. We will always be very grateful to

Délia, and her dream which became a reality, and to all the MIC Sisters for their generous dedication and sacrifices. Their missionary work was not limited to Canton but also to other regions in China; with time it was extended to Hong Kong and Taiwan. The MICs built schools, managed them; through their thoughtful actions and good examples they not only witnessed the Good News, but inspired young women to consecrate their lives to God and join them as missionary nuns. Being a Chinese of the Catholic faith, I thank the Lord for having sent these Sisters to the Far East who had the intention of taking good care of His sheep. Since China was their first mission, I wonder if it is incidental that their acronym "MIC" could have a double meaning: Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception but also "Mission in China".



Wilson Wong

I will always remember, September 21, 2017. On that day, I had the honor of accompanying Cardinal Joseph Zen, emeritus Bishop of Hong Kong, during a visit at the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, in Laval, Quebec. Even though the Institute is only 13 km from downtown Montreal, it was the first time I had an occasion to visit the Mother House of the MIC Sisters and the museum of Venerable Mother Délia-Tétreault.

1909: THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

When I entered the museum, my eyes went directly towards an old black

PHOTOS:

¹ Downtown Montreal
© Shutterstock

² Sister Cecilia Hong
with young people in
Montreal

Photo Credit: MIC

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CHINESE BORN HERE OR ABROAD

While visiting the Mother House, I met Sr. Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, Directress of *Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News*. She asked me what differences could be observed between the Chinese born in the big cities of China, in Hong Kong and those born here. It's an interesting question. Since China opened up to the world, numerous Chinese immigrated to Canada; they wished to pursue their post-secondary education and were attracted by the three Montreal universities and the polytechnic school.

When walking the streets of Montreal, it is not difficult to see the difference between the young Chinese born here and those born in China or Hong Kong. First, the Chinese who come from China have a tendency to group together while those born in Quebec or Canada easily mix with friends from diverse ethnic origins.

Another noticeable point is the language spoken with friends. The Chinese from China speak Mandarin with their peers, those from Hong Kong speak Cantonese. Those who are born here speak fluently English or French with their friends even if the latter are of Chinese origin.

Clothing is another factor. For the young Chinese there is little difference the way they dress because most of them wear loose clothing. However, the Chinese from China have very different tastes compared to the Chinese youth born in Canada.

CYBERDEPENDENCE

If there exists differences between these young people, they also have things in common. No matter where you go, most of them, whether Chinese or not, they possess a smart phone. They don't use it so much for calling but rather for texting. Parents often complain that their children spend too much time on social networks. Indeed, many young people have tons of virtual friends on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter but have not one true friend. Parents worry the most when their children hide in their room and do nothing but surf the internet or play video games. The consequence: they remain isolated from the rest of society and do not learn how to interact socially.

THE UNFATHOMABLE WAYS OF GOD

At first, I thought my visit at the MICs Mother House would be normal and typical of a first visit somewhere. However, it was an occasion to reflect on a subject I never thought of approaching while going about my everyday life. Through Sr. Marie-Paule, God helped me to see today's youth in a different light, no matter the place where they were born. She made me understand that they need our love, our affection, and our support to help them develop a strong self-esteem. I have gained more from this visit than I ever expected and that is why Thursday, September 21, 2017 will always be for me a very special day. 💜



ALAIN LAMONTAGNE, D.D.
DENTURIST



**Makes, fits,
repairs dentures**

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

Tel.: (450) 682-0907

Office day and night

We take care of you
aramark



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



The Fantasies of God in Délia's Life



Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

It is interesting to note that all the great illuminations Délia had during her lifetime took place in nature. In his book, the French Canadian author, Yvon Langlois¹ mentions: a field of ripe wheat, a raspberry patch, the family's garden. Moreover, her baptismal name, Délia, seems to announce what is to come. A lovely name, whose consonance is reminiscent of the dahlia flower which blossoms everywhere in Quebec during the summer season.

At a young age, little Délia lost her twin brother as well as her mother. Adopted by an aunt and uncle who had

no children she would play by herself; often she would hide in the attic to read old magazines of the Holy Childhood and of the Propagation of the Faith buried in boxes. The stories of the missionaries enthused her and fascinated her mind to the point that, one night, she had a dream which she related at a later date. *I saw a field of ripe wheat that stretched as far as the eye could see. Suddenly, all those ears of wheat were changed into heads of children.* Délia understood the call – to go tell all the children about Jesus. Thus, the first traits of her missionary vocation were already being sketched.

Speaking about the origin of her work, Délia one day confided: *I was out in the country at an uncle's home and with my cousins I went raspberry picking. While I was still busy picking, I saw in spirit a large house, like a monastery, which was filled with priests, and another one filled with sisters...* When the novitiate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception was built at Pont-Viau and next door was the construction of the seminary for the Foreign Missions Society which she had suggested to the Bishops of Quebec, then did she realize the meaning of the vision she had as a young adult.

We also learned from her that one day, while she was sitting alone in the family's home garden, she felt an inner enlightenment. Not surprising the reason why she invited her Sisters to give thanks to God for the beauty of creation. Even today, with summer and vacation time approaching, ready to offer us rest and joy, Délia's message to all of us is still pertinent: *As you admire this magnificent nature, this beautiful lake, the distant mountains, this fir tree forest, do you think of our Father in heaven who created all this for us, His children, and for us to give Him glory?* ☺

¹ LANGLOIS, Yvon, *Délia – Daring to Reach Unknown Frontiers*
– (the inspiration behind this article)

A Dream of Liberation



Maurice Demers is an associate professor in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sherbrooke. He is the young father of three children.



The Haitian people have struggled for their freedom throughout their existence: first, the abolition of slavery in 1794, then the declaration of independence in 1804 (as the first free black republic in the world), then the opposition against imperialism (both French and American) and the insurrection against dictators who have marked its political history. Since 1942, hundreds of missionaries from Quebec have gone to Haiti to evangelize the population and support the local Church, as well as help the people in their quest for emancipation. The experience of Sister Marie-Paule Sanfaçon in Haiti, from 1971 to 1990, tells us of her meeting with the Haitian people and what the missionaries tried to sow in this country. We spoke with Sister Marie-Paule to hear about her missionary experience.

PHOTOS:

¹ Negre marron ² (l. to r.) Sr. Lucette Gilbert, Sr. Venus Monestine, Sr. Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, at Cap Haïtien ³ In memory of Father Jean-Marie Vincent, s.m.m. ⁴ Youth's Pastoral Committee – 1st row to the right: Father Quesnel Alphonse, s.m.m. ⁵ Youth Rally
Photos Credit: MIC Archives

Maurice Demers

What first emerged in our interview is the love that Sister Marie-Paule has for the Haitian people. She told us: *The Haitian people get under your skin; they are very endearing.* After learning Creole, interacting with young people and rubbing shoulders with Haitian women and girls in the town and countryside, Sister Marie-Paule became so well-integrated into her adopted country that she would have liked to spend the rest of her days there.

She first taught catechesis, English, geometry and art at the Cap-Haitian school. She explained to us that later Father Yves Bélizaire, pastor at Trou-du-Nord, asked her to do pastoral ministry in his parish. After a few years, she accepted the invitation of Monseigneur François Gayot, from Cap-Haitian, who wanted her to be in charge of their catechesis program. Judging her contribution as being a humble one, Sister Marie-Paule was able to reach hundreds of Haitian girls and boys through her teachings.

Be proud of yourselves! she would tell them. What she wanted to plant in the deepest parts of their personality was a sense of self-confidence. She explains: *I wanted to give them confidence... I thought it was important that they stand tall and have confidence.* Confidence to cope with life, to help others, to be in solidarity with others and to find common solutions, despite the unpredictability of life.

Yet, she understood the socio-political situation was difficult. She explains: *When I arrived in Haiti in 1971, I dreamt of liberation for the people.* She found their living conditions unacceptable, the people were exploited and the Tonton Macoute were watching everywhere. The repression was palpable. By accompanying Haitians in their daily lives, teaching them to continue their fight for freedom and to stand up to adversity, Sister Marie-Paule helped the common people in their painful ordeal.



To reach young people, she did not hesitate to incorporate aspects of Haitian culture into her activities, so that they could be proud of both their culture and their history, despite the Duvalier father-son dictatorship. The Catholic Church, since the Vatican II council in the early 1960s, encouraged the development of local cultures. That was why, during a gospel night with the theme “freedom,” she integrated the celebration of the Bois Caïman of 1771, where slaves swore to fight for their emancipation. She explains: *We opened the doors of the church to the outside, where there was enough space for dancers and mimes, a place where young people could dance. We organized a celebration of the Bois Caïman because, for Haitians, it is a powerful reference to the fight for freedom. In fact, Dutty Boukman, the neg'marron, is the one who breaks his chains and swears an oath of freedom during a voodoo ceremony, a sacred gesture for Haitians. Then, Father Michel Chéri preached on liberty according to Saint Paul. This delighted his audience. The gospel strongly impacted the Haitian people and touched their hearts.*

Freedom was discussed at length during the 1970s and 1980s; the Catholic Church and missionaries were influenced by the theology of liberation. Quebec missionaries supported citizen initiatives against dictatorships that took power in

the region at that time. Sister Marie-Paule, risking her life, participated in marches and protests to oppose the dictatorship. She told us: *I remember writing a letter to say goodbye to my loved ones. We walked the streets of Port-au-Prince in silence, despite military surveillance and helicopters.* The people said, “sa si moun a nous,” which means – the people recognized that we were with them.

Sister Marie-Paule's presence in Haiti, accompanying and teaching the people, has touched the lives of thousands of people over the years. She remembers having worked a lot with Fathers Alphonse Quesnel and Jean-Marie Vincent, two Montfortian priests. Father Quesnel is currently a bishop in Fort Liberté, Haiti, but Father Jean-Marie Vincent was murdered in 1994. As the situation became more dangerous, Sister Marie-Paule's superior asked her to return to Quebec where other tasks awaited her. However, the Haitian people have always held a special place in her heart. Her years spent in the Haitian republic have sown a bit of hope; hope for justice in the world that the people still hold in their hearts. 🌸

Being Committed to a True Cause



¹ Carole Guévin was a Lay Missionary in Nicaragua and Lebanon.

Carole Guévin, M.L.¹

It's on Barclay Street, in Montreal, Quebec that my story began with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC). In 1990, I signed up to be a volunteer at PROMIS, an organization in the Côte-des-Neiges area which helps newly arrived immigrants, founded under the leadership of Sister André Ménard, M.I.C. I had no idea what was awaiting me with these Sisters.

For almost fifteen years, I have had the joy of working as assistant director and with the members of the *MIC Missionary Press*. This work was for me a mission which I plunged into with all my heart, my energies, and my deep convictions. The joy of being committed to a true cause gave me great satisfaction and it was most fulfilling.

I could not have accomplished so much without the help of people

around me. The unfailing support of Sr. Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, Directress of the publication, guided me with her heart, her humanness, her clear-sightedness, and dedication. She was for me a source of constant inspiration and I will always be most grateful to her. I do not want to forget the precious collaboration of Sr. Claudette Bouchard, Editor of the *MIC Mission News* who, during the absence of my Directress, passed on her experience and accompanied me with flexibility and determination in carrying out the publishing of the magazines.

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to Sr. Agathe Durand who has been the author of my inner transformation and who presented my candidacy for the newly created position intended for a lay person in 2004.

It was also a pleasure for me to be in contact with the Board of Directors and the successive members of the Provincial Council. I thank them warmly for trusting me all along those many years.

In 2015, even before digitizing our magazines, a project we were working on, I had begun reflecting on a possible retirement. Striking and significant events helped me realize that life was calling me to other commitments and a new path was opening before me.

I want to emphasize how much I loved working with the Sisters and the personnel of the *MIC Missionary Press*; I was happy to be part of that beautiful large family.

I leave with the satisfaction of knowing that I fully participated in the evolution of the publication, in the realization of a great challenge—the creation of the *Virtual Center of the MIC Historical Missionary Memory* and the digitization of all our magazines. My most sincere wish would be to see a younger generation of individuals who would ensure the continuity of this mission magazine published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

I thank wholeheartedly all our readers; thank you for your fidelity and your generosity in supporting the Mission with the MIC Sisters through your subscription, whether in paper or digital form and for your generous donations. 

CAM-5 Project – Bolivia/Peru 2018



Audrey Charland

Every four years, a major event is organized under the banner of MISSION entitled: *The Missionary Congress of the Americas*. This year, from July 10-14, 2018, Bolivia will be the host country of this memorable gathering, welcoming thousands of people. The program will include a variety of conferences and workshops, all as interesting as the other.

The theme “*The Joy of the Gospel: heart of the prophetic mission, source of reconciliation and communion*” will be content for reflection and sharing among the participants. In view of our society, it is necessary to take a step back and then reflect upon the future of Mission which is at the heart of our respective ministries. Without doubt, cooperation and mutual aid will be in the forefront of our exchanges spearheading us into action.

However, for me, CAM-5 Project will not be limited only to this Congress. This journey will also have

promotional and exploratory elements. Pencil in hand, somewhat like a reporter, I will collect the maximum information as I observe the life of the MIC Sisters who are well integrated into the Bolivian and Peruvian cultures. Immersion seems to me as the best way to adequately know and understand the work of the Sisters in the field, but also to learn more about the cultural customs. Most probably you will have the pleasure of discovering the details of my tour, in words and pictures, in the future issues of the *MIC Mission News*.

This large scale project would not be possible without the collaboration of generous donors. Thanks to the funds received from our readers, friends and supporters, I will be able to represent the *MIC Missionary Press* and the Institute of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC)* at this crucial event – an important turning point in the development of partnerships. This kind of investment is a PLUS in the pursuit of publishing a magazine whose content is pertinent, rich, and diversified. ♡

CAM-5 CONGRESS




This stay in South America will also be an opportunity to discover local culture and to be intimately in touch with the vibrant faith of this colorful people. With this immersion in the MIC missions of Bolivia and Peru, I will be able to know the reality of the nuns' field, in addition to meet persons who illuminate their daily lives.

These testimonies will provide me, without the shadow of a doubt, a very rich and diverse material for the writing of articles. You will have the chance to read the narration of my journey, illustrated by some photographs, in your next *MIC Mission News*!

Your donation will allow me to participate in this important and far-reaching project. Sincere thank you for your generosity!

On line : <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/9302>
 By check : MIC Missionary Press (CAM-5 Project)
 120, place Juge-Desnoyers, Laval (Qc) H7G 1A4

MIC Archives



Evangelization in Continental China

Last summer, Sister Maria-Goretti Sun, M.I.C., from Taiwan, Ms. Woo, and an associate, Ms. Peug, embarked on a three-week evangelizing mission in China, in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Chengdu, where Délia Tétréault had sent her very first missionaries back in 1906. The Paris Foreign Mission Society had begun evangelizing the Sichuan Province in the 17th century, and the MIC Sisters were honoured to follow in their footsteps and continue their mission.

Therese Peug, AsMIC

THE SHARING OF FAITH

Due to a communication issue, we were unable to obtain information on the people and parishes we were supposed to visit before our departure. We were concerned, but knew our fate was in the hands of the Holy Spirit. When we arrived in China, Christians informed us of the official policy to follow. In Chengdu, the words *Freedom of belief is the strength of the people* appeared on posters around town. It was evident that this message was a reference to Marxism and had little to do with religion.

We are particularly grateful to our host, Ms. Chang, baptized at the Guanxi

parish in Taiwan, for having invited us to Chengdu. Devoted to the Church, she runs fundraising campaigns to rebuild churches to accommodate visiting Christians. We went to the Quionlai parish to attend a two-day conference on faith. There were over eighty participants, most of whom were senior women. We also visited the Paolin and Mulee parishes in the suburb of Quionlai. More than one thousand Catholics live in Quionlai, but because of a lack of priests, Father Sheu is responsible for three additional parishes, which he visits only once a month to celebrate Sunday Mass.

FEELINGS OF SADNESS

In 1879, priests from the *Paris Foreign Missions* began evangelizing in Sichuan Province, in Mulee, where a school and a seniors' residence now stand. I was saddened to see the dilapidated state of these

PHOTOS:

¹ Sacred Heart Church
— Guangyuan, China

² A group of Christians

Photos Credit:

Maria-Goretti Sun, M.I.C.

buildings behind the church. From 1949 to 1982, the church was closed due to persecutions, and during the Cultural Revolution that span from 1966 to 1976, it was partially destroyed. In 2005, the Government of China declared the church a historical monument, and in 2015, Father Sheu began reconstruction and resumed Sunday Mass once a month. Despite this unfortunate history, I was very touched to see that many older Catholics had preserved their faith. Over the years, the seeds of Good News had continued to sprout and thrive.

We continued our journey to the Datan Parish, in the Diocese of Guangyuan, four hundred miles from Chengdu. The church is hidden away in an isolated, mountainous region. The area is very beautiful and peaceful, but there is no public transportation. In 2010, after his ordination, Father Liu came to this church. A large training session was offered and close to one hundred participants came from different parishes. For the opening ceremony, Father Liu invited and welcomed seven local government officials who gave a speech.

At one point, someone asked the priest if he was a member of the patriotic or independent Church. “Whether I’m a member of the patriotic or independent Church is of no importance,” answered the priest. “My only wish is to spread the Good News.” This year marks the 60th anniversary of the patriotic Church. To mark the occasion, the government built a commemorative monument to honour Wang Liang Zuo, who first proposed a patriotic Church in 1957.

A SENSE OF HOPE

The Datan parish has long been a home for those afflicted with leprosy. Father Liu rebuilt it and, in 2015, the new church was inaugurated. The beautiful building also has a dormitory. Most Catholics in Datan live on the mountain, and some walk for over three hours to attend Sunday Mass. To accommodate them, Father Liu offers them lodging and breakfast. Visitors can therefore arrive on Saturday evening, attend the adoration and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and leave on Sunday.

Given that the church was closed for so long, Father Liu and Sister Maria Tao often travel to the mountain in search of Christians. Sometimes, they can only visit one or two families in a day, and their poor feet ache from the long walk. Sister Maria



told us about how God accompanies them in their evangelization process. One day, she recounted, they visited a village filled with men who were troubled by evil spirits. “Only a Catholic priest can help us!” exclaimed one of the elders. And so, Father Liu exorcised the men. Now, more than seventy Catholics attend Sunday Mass.

GRATITUDE

Our three weeks of evangelization in the Diocese of Chengdu were tremendously stimulating and deepened our faith. Despite the many difficulties and lack of physical and spiritual resources, the Catholics in Continental China still have faith. They look forward to Sunday Mass and the sacraments. Their desire to preserve their spiritual life reminded us that the search for God is deeply rooted in human nature. They taught us to feel grateful for all the spiritual riches we have access to.

Compared to Continental China, the Church of Taiwan is small but admirable, and has an abundance of spiritual resources. Churches are everywhere and Catholics can attend Mass and receive communion without fear. In almost every parish, groups study the bible to deepen their faith. We hope that more Taiwanese will visit China to share their rich spirituality with their brothers and sisters. We may not be able to change the current situation in China, but we can support and encourage our fellow Christians. 🙏



"Viva mi patria Bolivia!"



Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

THE CUECA¹ – FIRST STEP

It was time for the MIC Sisters in Bolivia to celebrate. On September 24, 2017, they joyfully highlighted the 60th anniversary of their arrival in South America. In 1957, the first 2 MICs – Sr. Irène Trudel and Sr. Lucile Baril arrived at La Paz. The following month, they settled at Cochabamba and opened a commercial school.

THE FOLLOWING STEPS

Afterwards, numerous MIC Sisters followed, offering their time, heart and life to the mission work in this country. They were welcome in many places, from the capital and a mining center on a high plateau, to the temperate and tropical zones; from populated cities and to remote villages often deprived of running water or electricity. Their apostolic hearts never wavered. According to the needs of the population, they served in many capacities: education, health care, social

service, communication, catechesis as well as pastoral and vocational animation. Thus, a variety of works came into being: establishing primary schools; training "doctors in sandals", computer and veterinarian technicians; animating the basic ecclesial communities and supporting movements on social justice; founding a health and hospital service cooperative; improving a radio station and empowering women in various fields.

AND THE DANCE CONTINUES...

The MIC project in South America expanded from Bolivia to Peru in 1960 and Chile in 1963. There also, the apostolate multiplied and was diversified. Young women from those three countries felt called to join the MIC Sisters from Canada, Philippines, Madagascar, Haiti who were present and working in various fields. Consequently, Bolivians, Peruvians, Chileans now live out their missionary ideal. Though Sisters have diminished in numbers and have grown older, most of the mission works remain and operate under a lay leadership that is well prepared. However, the MIC Sisters are still active in Cochabamba, BOLIVIA; in Lima, Cajabamba, and Pucallpa, PERU.

¹ Bolivian Folk Dance

PHOTOS:

¹ © Shutterstock

² Sr. Lucile Baril, pioneer

Photo Credit: MIC

To highlight the beginnings of this modest epic, a Mass was celebrated on October 10, 2017 in the parish church where the first MIC pioneers arrived; our Sisters are still present and active in Cochabamba. A large congregation of friends, collaborators and associates accompanied the Sisters to give thanks to God for the many blessings received in the course of all those years. They knew they were united, in thoughts and prayers, to the many missionaries who, at one time, worked in Bolivia but have returned to Canada or other countries. For the occasion, some kindly wrote to their former MIC friends; below are a few extracts from the letters received.

Anita Perron, my dear unforgettable Sister,

I hope you are in good health and I thank God who sent you in the mines and the countryside of Bolivia to work for His mission and left here traces... I send you a few souvenirs of the work your congregation accomplished in Bolivia, may you share them with your MIC Sisters... I offer you the very best of greetings as well as those from the young people of the mines. We thank God for everything we have received from you with affection.

Margarita Linares de Valdes

Dear Sister Monique,

I am united to you in joy and thanksgiving to God for all you have accomplished and still carry through as an important mission for the women in Bolivia. How many young people have studied at the Institute of Rural Education and are now fond to be women who know their rights, and no longer feel inferior as before... To you, dear Sister: Congratulations! May the God of history bless you,

and may the Virgin protect you. This evening, I will take part in the Thanksgiving Mass with the Sisters.

*Affectionately,
Cecilia*



*Very respected
and dear Sr. Suzanne,*

Last night, we had the privilege of being with the MIC Sisters who were celebrating their 60th year of apostolate in Bolivia. Hospicio's Church was completely full, a sign which shows how much you have been and still are appreciated in Cochabamba and Bolivia... During the reception which followed in the parish hall, a series of testimonies were given; Llallagua's representatives from COPOSA (Popular Health Cooperative) paid tribute to all of you who worked at that hospital: Srs. Marcelle, Colette and yourself. Some people from Catavi remembered you and emphasized what Sr. Anita and you did while being of service there. All those who worked with you, send their best greetings and warm embrace.

The religious celebration as well as the reception were beautiful tributes for all you have accomplished in Bolivia. Dear Sr. Suzanne, we congratulate all of you for being MICs, for all you have done and still do. May God bless you always!

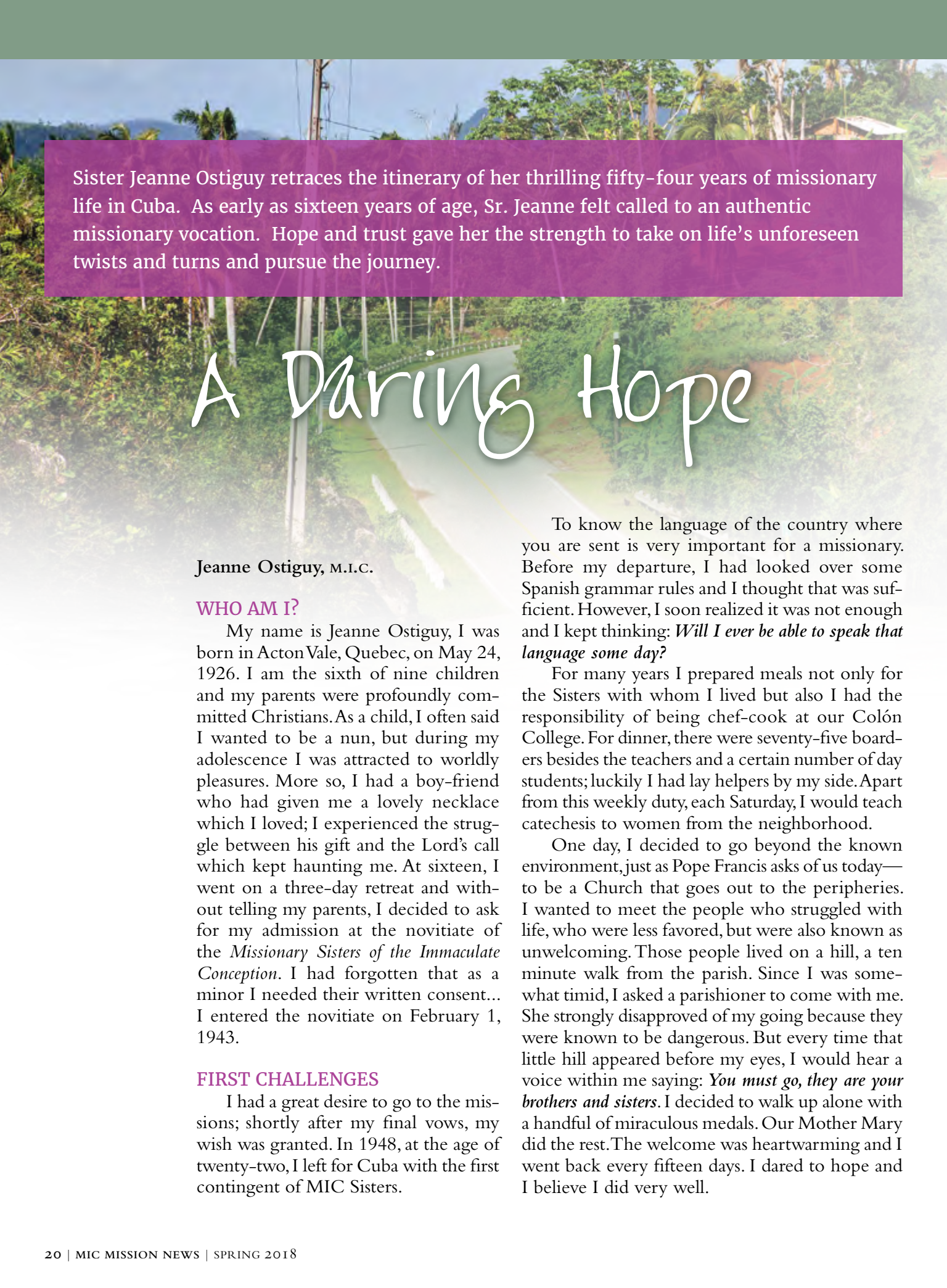
Beba and Diego Laneuville



Giving thanks to God with all our dear Bolivian friends, and thanking them for their warm welcome, we sing to the tune of one of their popular dances, the *cueca*:

*Viva mi patria Bolivia,
Una gran nación.
Por ella doy mi vida,
También mi corazón.*

*Long live my homeland Bolivia,
A great nation.
For her, I give my life
And also my heart.*



Sister Jeanne Ostiguy retraces the itinerary of her thrilling fifty-four years of missionary life in Cuba. As early as sixteen years of age, Sr. Jeanne felt called to an authentic missionary vocation. Hope and trust gave her the strength to take on life's unforeseen twists and turns and pursue the journey.

A Daring Hope

Jeanne Ostiguy, M.I.C.

WHO AM I?

My name is Jeanne Ostiguy, I was born in Acton Vale, Quebec, on May 24, 1926. I am the sixth of nine children and my parents were profoundly committed Christians. As a child, I often said I wanted to be a nun, but during my adolescence I was attracted to worldly pleasures. More so, I had a boy-friend who had given me a lovely necklace which I loved; I experienced the struggle between his gift and the Lord's call which kept haunting me. At sixteen, I went on a three-day retreat and without telling my parents, I decided to ask for my admission at the novitiate of the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception*. I had forgotten that as a minor I needed their written consent... I entered the novitiate on February 1, 1943.

FIRST CHALLENGES

I had a great desire to go to the missions; shortly after my final vows, my wish was granted. In 1948, at the age of twenty-two, I left for Cuba with the first contingent of MIC Sisters.

To know the language of the country where you are sent is very important for a missionary. Before my departure, I had looked over some Spanish grammar rules and I thought that was sufficient. However, I soon realized it was not enough and I kept thinking: *Will I ever be able to speak that language some day?*

For many years I prepared meals not only for the Sisters with whom I lived but also I had the responsibility of being chef-cook at our Colón College. For dinner, there were seventy-five boarders besides the teachers and a certain number of day students; luckily I had lay helpers by my side. Apart from this weekly duty, each Saturday, I would teach catechesis to women from the neighborhood.

One day, I decided to go beyond the known environment, just as Pope Francis asks of us today—to be a Church that goes out to the peripheries. I wanted to meet the people who struggled with life, who were less favored, but were also known as unwelcoming. Those people lived on a hill, a ten minute walk from the parish. Since I was somewhat timid, I asked a parishioner to come with me. She strongly disapproved of my going because they were known to be dangerous. But every time that little hill appeared before my eyes, I would hear a voice within me saying: *You must go, they are your brothers and sisters*. I decided to walk up alone with a handful of miraculous medals. Our Mother Mary did the rest. The welcome was heartwarming and I went back every fifteen days. I dared to hope and I believe I did very well.

WE HAD NOT FORESEEN IT COMING

In 1961, a dramatic change took place. Fidel Castro nationalized all the schools, health centers, plus commerce. The MIC Sisters had to let go of their seven schools. When the State would take over one school after another, the Sisters would find refuge in Colón. We were then thirty-seven Sisters and twenty-seven had to leave the country.

The day of the departure is still very vivid in my memory; I see the Sisters taking the bus with tears in their eyes and those of us who stayed behind we were crying as well. What sadness! How heartbreaking! We asked ourselves: *What's in store for us?* But we remained trustful in the hands of the Lord and serene about the future. It was the hour of Hope. We dared to hope as we needed it.

Thanks to the Bishop's intercession, we were able to occupy a section of the Seminary which was not far from our school. Though we were always under surveillance, we decided with the priests of the Foreign Missions Society, (PMÉ) to begin cleaning sacristies in nearby villages in the hope that these could eventually serve to welcome children for lessons in catechesis. With time and prudence our wish came true. I had the joy of preparing many children for their first communion and to visit their families. I also baptized little ones and had the opportunity of sharing the faith with their parents. What happiness to journey with a group of thirty adults who wished to receive the sacraments!

A BALM FOR THE HEART

We couldn't believe it!... In 1998, Pope John Paul II announced his visit to Cuba and before his arrival, he wanted that his letter and Chapter two of St Luke's gospel be broadcasted everywhere on the Island of Cuba. As I listened to the Word of God I felt such a great joy that I had goose bumps; the country had gone through thirty-nine years of complete silence regarding religion.

The Pope celebrated an outdoor Mass at Havana's Revolution Square; thousands of people attended this special event. When the Credo was said and asked the question: *Do you believe in God, the Father...?* From the crowd came a resounding: *Yes, I believe!* Again, I felt a chill through all my body.



Sr. Jeanne and the late Pope John Paul II during his visit to Havana, Cuba
Photo Credit: MIC



(2nd r.- 3rd to the left) Sr. Jeanne
Photo Credit: MIC

Notwithstanding the numerous pitfalls, obstacles, dangers that cross their faith journey, the Cuban people remain faithful to Christ; *la Virgen de la Caridad* (Our Lady of Charity) remains their strength, their courage.

FAREWELL CUBA

After fifty-four years in a country that gave me so much, I definitively came back to Quebec where I have been serving as sacristan for the past thirteen years.

I give thanks to God for all those years in Cuba. I loved the Cuban people and I still love them. I pray for the nation, that one day all may know true freedom as children of God. It is my greatest Hope... ♡

With You, O Lord



Claire Caron, M.I.C.

(Sr. Jean-Maxime)

1930-2017

St. Clement-de-Tourville,
Quebec

Sister Claire's motto was: *Sow happiness by the handful, it's the bread that is most lacking on earth.* The eleventh child in a family of eighteen children, she quickly learned to be generous and caring. Before entering religious life she devoted most of her time in keeping watch over Jean, a handicap child. In 1954, when she was welcomed at our novitiate, Claire's life experience at home helped her to adapt easily to the requirements of religious life. During her thirty years in Madagascar, she communicated gratitude and wonder while responding to the many community chores. Her humble and attentive heart, her apostolic spirit touched the lives of many who crossed her path. Dear Claire, may you now be rewarded for the abundant happiness you have sown throughout your lifetime.



Lise Doucet, M.I.C.

1943-2017

Shawinigan, Quebec

After taking a *Life Orientation Course*, Lise decided to embrace the vocation she had been searching for since her adolescence: she will be a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception. She entered the novitiate in 1964. Ten years later, her leadership as a teacher-guide became an asset as an educator in Haiti, in the formation of future professors and literacy programs. In Quebec, two Haitian language and culture centers benefitted of Sr. Lise's dynamic and creative competence. Unfortunately, in 2007, her health condition led her to prematurely retire from her work until September 17, 2017 when she said her final goodbye. Your name, dear Lise, will remain lovingly written in the hearts of many. Magnificat!



Pauline Mailloux, M.I.C.

(Sr. Yvonne-de-Jésus)

1922 – 2017

St. Angèle-de-Monnoir,
Quebec

At the age of nineteen, Sr. Pauline was welcomed at our novitiate. In 1956 she was appointed to Haiti; her thirty years of apostolate among the people she loved bore much fruit. Though rather timid and very sensitive, she accepted to take over the direction of the *Myriam Center* where empowering women was of utmost importance. For Sr. Pauline – talents, appearance, social status did not prevail – her focus was: the **PERSON**. Her spirit of prayer and of faith helped her overcome whatever difficulties came her way. Such a spirit granted her peace particularly during the last seven years of her life when she became completely blind and hard of hearing. Sister Pauline passed away in October 2017 to finally enter into the eternal Light.



Yvette Bélanger, M.I.C.

(Sr. Marie-Laurentia)

1927-2017

Ottawa, Ontario

At eleven years old, Yvette became a girl guide. Indirectly, the activities prepared her for religious life which she dreamed of and confided to her captain. After her studies and two years of office work, Yvette entered our novitiate on February 1, 1947. Five years later, she was appointed to Malawi, (Africa). Endowed with leadership qualities as well as being enthusiastic, joyful, creative and a good listener, Sr. Yvette was the ideal guide for the Sisters with whom she lived and worked. Upon her return to Quebec, it is with enthusiasm that she took on the community's art boutique; she thus became a role model for the young Sisters in formation. Thank you Sr. Yvette for your positive outlook on life; we will long remember you.



MISSION
CHEZ
NOUS

CHRISTIAN
SOLIDARITY
AND
FIRST NATIONS

JOIN our Fundraising 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR DONATION,
PLEASE CONTACT US:

missioncheznous@bellnet.ca

418 647-6440

Toll-free number: 1 888 280 6440

915, René-Lévesque Blvd. West, Suite 100
Québec (Québec) G1S 1T8

La prescription parfaite *The perfect prescription*



N. FRANCIS SHEFTESHY, PHARMACIEN

Tél. : 514.384.6177

Téléc. : 514.384.2171



PRINTED IN CANADA

Support the Mission

by subscribing to the MIC MISSION NEWS

☐ I subscribe / I renew my subscription* ☐ I SUBSCRIBE A RELATIVE / FRIEND

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

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

Sr. Magarete Dossous with the
Students of Mother Délia Institute

Name: _____ *Subscriber No: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel.: () _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please make your
check payable to:
MIC Mission News

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