

MIC MISSION NEWS

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To sow seeds of joy and hope

SINCE 1923

Canada

What a Team!

Madagascar

PRÉCI Project

In Focus

EMBRACE LIFE
TO THE FULLEST



Missionary Prayer Intentions 2018

JULY

Priests and their Pastoral Ministry:

That priests, who experience fatigue and loneliness in their pastoral work, may find help and comfort in their intimacy with the Lord and in their friendship with their priest brothers.

AUGUST

The Treasure of Families: That any far-reaching decisions of economists and politicians may protect the family as one of the treasures of humanity.

SEPTEMBER

Young People in Africa: That young people in Africa may have access to education and work in their own countries.

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° 3 | JULY • AUGUST • SEPTEMBER 2018

SPIRITUAL LIFE

4 What a Team! – *André Gadbois*

CULTURES AND MISSION

6 Becoming Familiar with Differences – *Maurice Demers*

YOUTH

8 The Budding of a Better Life – *Émilienne Raherimalala* **10** The Fantasies of God in Délia's Life – *Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.*

IN FOCUS: EMBRACE LIFE TO THE FULLEST

11 PRÉCI Project – Madagascar – *Thomas Cardinal* **14** Summer Fun – *Éric Desautels* **16** Work of Hope in Haiti – *Mésina Paulémon, M.I.C.*

ABOUT THE MICs

18 The Path of Being – *Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.* **20** Our Hearts Are Restless – *Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.*

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PRÉCI Project team with employees from Mamisoa and villagers from Ambatofotsy
Photo Credit: Thomas Cardinal

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Urgent SMS...

Hurry, respond, I'm on the edge of an abyss... To receive a text like this would tear at the deepest parts of our hearts, wouldn't it? Yet how many people, young and old, all helpless, commit suicide without ever receiving help? Whether in Korea, Japan or here in Quebec, statistics show that the suicide rate remains high. What is happening in our modern societies?

An obsessive search for well-being, the race to perform better, global superficiality and egocentrism to the extreme can discourage the most tenacious of people.

Recently, I met some young people who did not hesitate to contribute to a good cause. Engineer graduates from Quebec spent months in Madagascar, in a remote region, building a medical center and creating a climate of dignity and respect for the people there. High school students from the Sherbrooke area went to Costa Rica, leaving behind the "known" for the "unknown" to become familiar with another culture and to get involved in their own communities when they returned. These important travels give people another view of the world and they become inspired to take part in its transformation.

These days, many people study psychology to better understand others and help them conquer the most difficult times in life. Sister Micheline did not hesitate to go back to school to help those in need, especially in Haiti. Sister Cecilia had sessions with young people so they can better understand each



Pascal Pelletier Dubé at work / Photo Credit: PRÉCI Project

other and work toward an ideal life. In his article, Éric shows us the importance of sports in the lives of young people, activities still being introduced and used by missionaries.

During this summer season, seize the occasion and **live life to the fullest** by spending beautiful moments with your family, taking time to rest and search within to better understand yourself and look at life with enthusiasm.

How is it that so many people despair of life? A question I ask myself... and are we not appalled by what we often hear and see?

Live life to the fullest for a more fraternal world, together where the joy of meeting each other in real life, not virtually, gives us hope for a better world, singing along with Jean Ferrat, *Que c'est beau la vie* or *What a Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong...

Marie-Paula Sanjeon, m.i.c.

What a Team!

SEASONS—THE PATHS THAT LEAD US TO THE CENTER OF OURSELVES.



André Gadbois

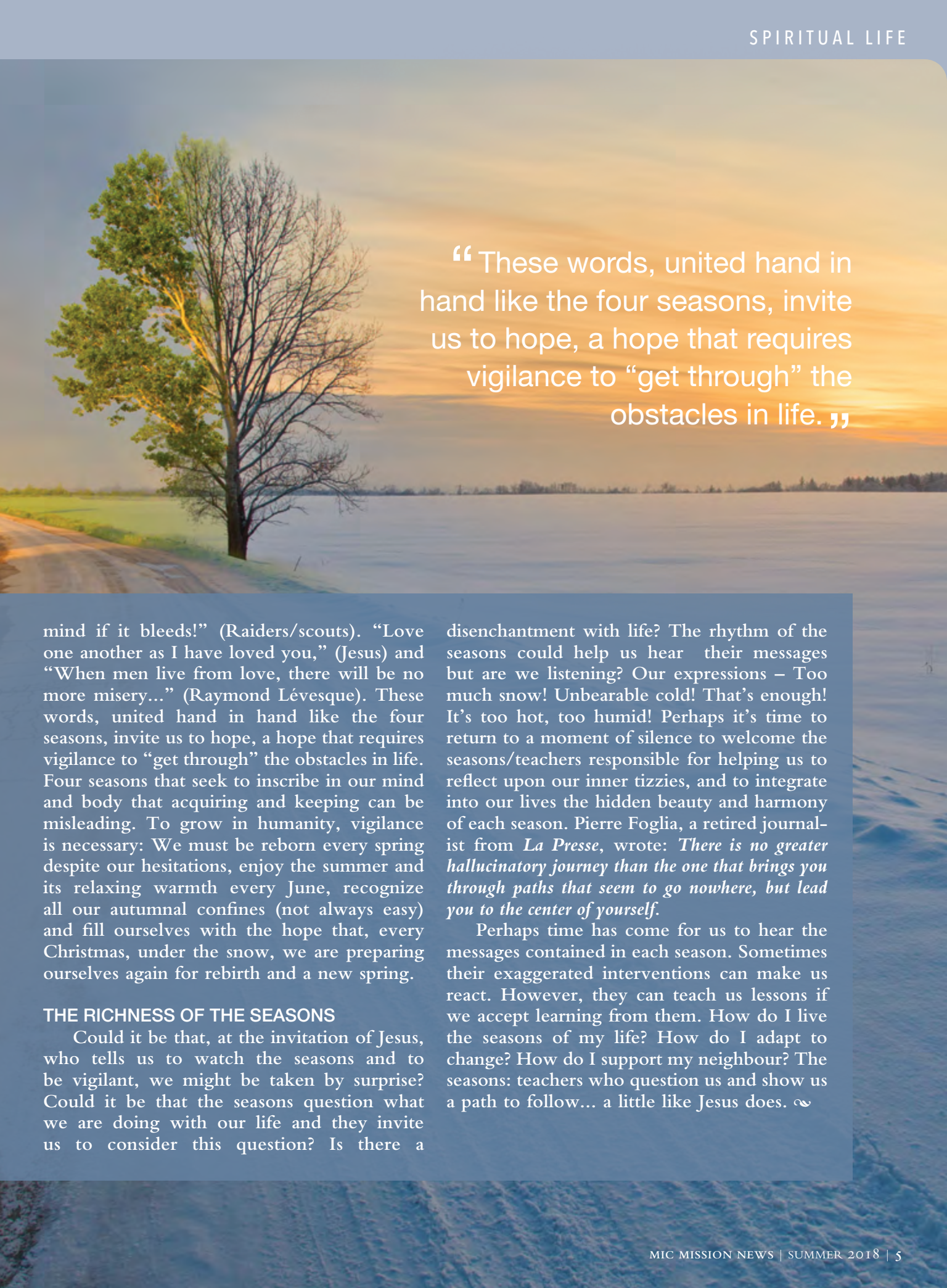
In Quebec, we say that there are four seasons and they are rather different one from the other. Together, these four wonders become skillful teachers, capable of teaching us the art of living serenely and harmoniously. In my experience, as someone in his 70s, I've learned that they do not harm each other, they are not jealous, they accept each other generously and humbly. I dare to say that they are surprisingly kind and their "lessons" are surprisingly subtle... a little like the parables of the Prophet of Nazareth: they disturb and provoke small "resurrections." Sometimes they shake us or anger us, defy us or knock us down. We need silence to discover their rich messages and walk with them... hand in hand! They do not strike those who poke fun at them or refuse to embrace them. Without pretention, they invite patient observation, open dialogue, and sharing of talents.

They invite us to look at things differently, to take the risk of reflecting deeply for a while.

A TEAM OF FOUR TEACHERS

This team of four seeks to develop our vigilance so we may continue to grow. Unprovoked, we tend to fall asleep, to resign or collapse, to close our eyes and our ears, to cut corners, to neglect parts of ourselves, to prefer darkness to the Light, to forget the Beauty that lives within us. These four teachers challenge us to open ourselves up to a state of receiving Life and the unknown; somewhat like the Prophet of Nazareth and what he asks of us... Our resistance to the unknown is common and tenacious: silence scares us, as does loneliness, commitment and separation. We are frightened by the newcomer, a project we can't carry out, and our inability to keep up with it all.

Some words return to me: "Get up and walk!" and "Nourish them yourself!" (Jesus). And, "They did not know it was impossible, so they did it" (youngsters from France during their protests in May 2008). And, "Never



“These words, united hand in hand like the four seasons, invite us to hope, a hope that requires vigilance to “get through” the obstacles in life.”

mind if it bleeds!” (Raiders/scouts). “Love one another as I have loved you,” (Jesus) and “When men live from love, there will be no more misery...” (Raymond Lévesque). These words, united hand in hand like the four seasons, invite us to hope, a hope that requires vigilance to “get through” the obstacles in life. Four seasons that seek to inscribe in our mind and body that acquiring and keeping can be misleading. To grow in humanity, vigilance is necessary: We must be reborn every spring despite our hesitations, enjoy the summer and its relaxing warmth every June, recognize all our autumnal confines (not always easy) and fill ourselves with the hope that, every Christmas, under the snow, we are preparing ourselves again for rebirth and a new spring.

THE RICHNESS OF THE SEASONS

Could it be that, at the invitation of Jesus, who tells us to watch the seasons and to be vigilant, we might be taken by surprise? Could it be that the seasons question what we are doing with our life and they invite us to consider this question? Is there a

disenchantment with life? The rhythm of the seasons could help us hear their messages but are we listening? Our expressions – Too much snow! Unbearable cold! That’s enough! It’s too hot, too humid! Perhaps it’s time to return to a moment of silence to welcome the seasons/teachers responsible for helping us to reflect upon our inner tizzies, and to integrate into our lives the hidden beauty and harmony of each season. Pierre Foglia, a retired journalist from *La Presse*, wrote: *There is no greater hallucinatory journey than the one that brings you through paths that seem to go nowhere, but lead you to the center of yourself.*

Perhaps time has come for us to hear the messages contained in each season. Sometimes their exaggerated interventions can make us react. However, they can teach us lessons if we accept learning from them. How do I live the seasons of my life? How do I adapt to change? How do I support my neighbour? The seasons: teachers who question us and show us a path to follow... a little like Jesus does. ☺



CULTURAL TRIPS IN SOUTHERN COUNTRIES ARE POPULAR IN QUEBEC SCHOOLS. MANY HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OFFER SHORT-TERM STAYS IN LATIN AMERICA OR ASIA IN LIGHT OF OFFERING THEIR STUDENTS A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE. SOME OF THE GOALS ARE: BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH A CULTURE OR SOCIETIES DIFFERENT FROM THEIR OWN, PROPOSING OTHER WAYS OF LIVING, AND OF PERCEIVING POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY.

Becoming Familiar With Differences



Maurice Demers

CULTURAL TRAVELS

Since dictatorships have given way to democratic governments in Latin America and violence issues have been resolved in many countries, it is possible for schools in many regions of Quebec to offer cultural or humanitarian travels to students. For example, *Saint-Jean-Eudes School* goes beyond cultural exposures but offer travels on a humanitarian basis: *How about doing some community work in a developing country? Why not! The students of Saint-Jean-Eudes decided to have a 'hands-on' experience in Nicaragua, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica and Honduras*¹. Such trips offer many enriching experiences to the Quebec students. I accompanied a group of twenty-three students between 16-17 years of age who had enrolled in the program *Culture and International Languages* at Beaurivage High School, located at Saint Agapit, on the south

shore of Quebec City. On November 12-19, 2016, we travelled to Ticos, a nickname given to the inhabitants of Costa Rica. This kind of cultural trip was a first experience for the students. Through the school program they had learned about cultural, political differences, as well as environmental and social subjects. Also, each student had to give a minimum of ten hours in community work². Some of the activities included work at recreation centers, in libraries, in sports organizations, to visit and assist the elderly. Moreover, animating pedagogical workshops helped elementary school students develop a sense of responsibility, creativity and positive self-esteem.

COSTA RICA, THE LUXURIANT

The choice of Costa Rica was an interesting destination. Security wise, it is one of the countries having the lowest homicide rate per inhabitant of the region. The country abolished its army in 1948, following a civil war; a decree was signed by the president, José Figueres Ferrer. From that

¹ <http://www.saint-jean-eudes.com/viescolaire/voyages>

² <https://web.csdn.qc.ca/actualites/langues-et-culture-internationale-lecole-secondaire-de-beaurivage>

PHOTOS:

¹ A family welcomes us

² Cleaning

³ Cleaning

Photos Credit:

M. Demers

moment, sums that were in the former budget for military expenses were invested in education, health care and certain military buildings were transformed into schools. The results were spectacular for the inhabitants of the country in comparison with other Latin American countries. In fact, Costa Rica did not live the somber hours of the cold war which threw Latin America into fire and blood. In the seventies, almost all other countries in the region were under military right-wing dictatorships.

Though Costa Rica is not considered as a poor country, living conditions are below those of Quebec. That reality allowed students to become aware of the challenges families in the South have to struggle with. We left Saturday, November 12, and stayed overnight at the capital, San José. The following day, we arrived in the small town of Chachagua. In groups of four, the students met their host families and they had to speak Spanish which they had learned at school. Meals were taken with the families, therefore they became familiar with the local food. Certain students enjoyed the multigenerational composition of families, while others noticed the influence of patriarchal relations.

After a half day of volunteer work at a primary school in Chachagua, the students visited the Arenal volcano at the national park. The next day, a zip-lining adventure was waiting for them at the Selvatura park, this was a favorite of most students during their trip. Then, they had a second day of volunteer work at the Monteverde biological reserve. Finally, their last day was at Samara beach where many went horse riding or surfing.

Students learned much from this trip: through the family experience they developed a sense of compassion and respect for others. The volunteer work at the biological reserve allowed them to be committed towards the community and become sensitive to many environmental issues. Some students confided having found the local diet as monotonous, *gallo pinto* is what we eat every day – a recipe having as ingredients: rice, black beans and Lizano sauce. They realized how lucky they were of living in Quebec and having access to a variety of foods. Others noticed how the people were warmhearted, generous and always ready

to welcome them. Briefly, it was a worthwhile trip for the students while at the same time experiencing new surroundings.

The two teachers accompanying the group, Nadia Rousseau and Nancy Girard, were satisfied with the travel because they reached their objectives. They explained that the goal of this tour was to lead students in discovering another way of life: *We want to give them a desire to discover something different and show them many ways of travelling, one of which is gaining a sense of community and experiencing the joy of knowing they are leaving something practical behind in the country they have visited.* A mission to pursue! 🌸





The budding of a better life

Emilienne Raherimalala

PHOTOS:
Émilienne and
her little neighbors
Photos Credit: MIC

The world today is greedy for excessive pleasure, seeking always to be in a state of well-being. We wish to live life to the fullest, to make the most of it, but the demands of performance are draining, and we are constantly searching for ways to prolong this state of physical and emotional well-being.

IMPERMANENCE

Man is constantly searching for the meaning of life. Does having everything make a person happy? What must one

do for life to be full of joy and filled with beautiful things? These questions make us consider the importance of living well and being happy—in both good and bad times—because everything changes; nothing is ever permanent in life.

ACCEPTING LIFE AND SELF

To accept life as it is and accepting yourself in the present moment, without pretending to be someone else, shows great wisdom. Living during a time of unsettling change was a shock to my system, but once I accepted the situation, I took control and found my joy.

Know how to harmonize the past, present, and future. For this to happen, we must listen to what is going on within, recognize what is happening in our life and learn to make sense of it. When we do not accept life as it is, we experience regret and disappointment when the time comes to face life's challenges. Yet, the pitfalls of the past can help a person move forward. From my personal experience, I must say that education, creativity, knowledge, interpersonal relationships, work... all these things have helped me grow. From the smallest incidents to the most important moments, they all played a crucial role and have contributed to my personal growth allowing me to become proud of the person I am today.

Recognize that the truth of a person lies within his identity in the present moment, because that moment is the only one we have. By recognizing this, we realize what it takes to change and be better in the present. When this desire is expressed, we can feel good about ourselves—we conquer difficulties more quickly and feel inner joy. In my experience, the more I acknowledge the state of my life, the more I become free and have the strength to follow my own path. I become creative and spontaneous, and I sometimes bring simple but surprising solutions to those who need my help. Recognizing my deep identity in the present moment restores balance, allows me to pay attention to my behavior and analyze it. This improves my self-confidence and makes me feel more positive, since “wanting is power,” and not wanting sets up an impassable barrier in front of us.

In fact, we must *choose* the inconvenient quest for the meaning of life over the apparent comfort of global superficiality. It is not always easy... it is very difficult. So, for the future to get better, we must face the challenges and discomforts of everyday life to get to the heart of our reality. *Living life to the fullest* means going toward those who need help, guidance, or solutions. In this

moment, the future is the fruit of the present, and the present is nothing but a bud waiting to grow. *Live fully* in the present moment so the future is more than perfect.

THE BURST OF A PLEASANT LIFE

Sooner or later, what is sown will flourish. So, it is important to appreciate life, to be happy even in difficult times. Challenges allow us to surpass our own selves; the joy and freedom that develops within oneself grows as the person opens to the present reality. In other words, when the heart is open, sources of joy spread naturally, however small. In my experience, I have found it is a challenge to live alone; sometimes I get bored and I cannot find anyone to talk to. So, I make friends. After work, I often take a route where I stop in and see a vegetable seller. By buying something there, I share her life, and my smile brings her joy. She becomes my friend and we develop a mutual trust.

It is in the bare human experience that the beauty of life unfolds. I live in the same building as three orphans. In addition to helping them with their studies, I also help them discover the beauty life has to offer. We take it in our hands and receive it as a gift from God. So, they become happy. Their dark sides fade, and they see the opportunity to flourish and move forward in life. Life arises, and joy bursts from their hearts. Every day becomes the seed for the next day, and they find that life is worth living fully and freely. These youngsters manage to share their stories with me, their joys and their sorrows. It allows them to heal their hearts from the wounds of the past. Then, they can live life to the fullest! 🌱

The Fantasies of God in Délia's Life



in a religious community, at the age of eighteen, she was judged as being “mischievous, offhand, emancipated, and somewhat exalted”.¹ Mischievous? Perhaps she was too joyful to fit in with the Jansenism spirit of the time. Offhand? We can suppose she expressed her personal opinions too freely; her creative thoughts were not always conformed to preconceived ideas. Emancipated? She was already conscious of the tremendous needs existing in the world; without doubt she was more open than the thinking of her milieu towards the end of the 19th century. Exalted? Being extraordinarily inspired in her futuristic views could be considered as suspicious by her peers and those around her.

Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb says the proverb. In other words, God mercifully ensures that misfortune does not overwhelm the weak or helpless; God takes pleasure in giving to each “lamb” what it needs to protect itself from the wind in order to accomplish its mission in the world. Leaders in the making are usually endowed with a pioneering spirit which leads them to sometimes take surprising initiatives.

Thus it was with Délia Tétreault, even before she became the Foundress of a religious institute. She stood out so well with astonishing new ideas that individuals who did not have the same broad-mindedness were perplexed before her behavior. During a short stay

Without knowing, young Délia had an avant-garde heart and mind. Facts proved that she was inspired by the Holy Spirit when she received the inner vision of her future mission. Without doubt, to protect her from the stormy winds, the same Holy Spirit revealed His presence and assured her that He would guide her.

Délia had a pioneering spirit when she dreamt to become a lay missionary. In the early twentieth century, in Quebec, did people speak about such a possibility? It's doubtful. Yet, Délia had been judged as capable of such a vocation. An experienced missionary proposed her to go to Africa to proclaim the Good News and she accepted. But God had another plan for Délia and illness prevented her to leave. She nevertheless became a great missionary without ever leaving her country. How could each one of us, right here at home, become missionaries with a pioneering spirit, favoring a return into the Lord's fold of so many “sheep”—shorn or not— who lost their way home? ∞

¹ *Positio*, P. 50

PHOTO:
Shutterstock

PRÉCI PROJECT

Madagascar



In collaboration with the *Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC)*, the *Student Reunification Program for International Cooperation (PRECI)* from *École de Technologie Supérieure (ÉTS)* in Montreal, constructed a medical center in the Ambatofotsy village, Madagascar.



PHOTOS:

Page 11

¹ Brick making

² Alignment

³ Foundation

⁴ Left to right: (back row) Jean-Simon Forest, Thomas Cardinal, Pascal Pelletier-Dubé; (front row) Janick Lavoie, Annabelle Boinet

Above

⁵ Medical Center completed

⁶ Dancing their joy, Side-view of the Center

Photos Credit: T. Cardinal

Thomas Cardinal

It is with joy and pride that a team of five students from ÉTS (Janick Lavoie, Pascal Pelletier-Dubé, Thomas Cardinal, Jean-Simon Forest and Annabelle Boinet) joined the large PRÉCI family, last fall 2016. Moved by the level of global inequality, these students decided to contribute, in their own way, to an engineering project which they translated in terms of sharing, cooperation, and humanitarianism.

Briefly, the project consisted in planning, seeking funds, designing and building a medical center for the Ambatofotsy local community. This village is located 300 km from the Capital, Antananarivo; its approximate population of 4,000 has no access to electricity and drinking water. In the vicinity there was no establishment for health care services and villagers had to walk more than three hours to find one. With determination and perseverance the PRÉCI team completed the project thus allowing all the inhabitants of the area to receive essential medical services and for women to give birth in adequate sanitary conditions.

The health center is a one floor building. It covers 240 square meters and it includes: a midwife consultation room, a delivery room, a post-delivery room, a rest/observation room, two care rooms, a sanitary area, a laboratory, an office. There is also a pharmacy section where patients can receive their medication without delay. Most of the construction took place from September 9 to December 14, 2017; it was officially completed on February 2, 2018. Three days later, the center received its first patients. A doctor comes three days a week; a nurse and midwife work full-time. This project has heightened the local population's awareness in regards to respecting the sexes: separate sanitary areas are available as well as two care rooms, one designated for men the other for women. Overall, the medical center permits the population to be educated in matters of health and hygiene.

To meet the foreseen deadline, PRÉCI called upon the building contractor Mamisoa and his qualified workers. During ninety-six days, an average of thirty workers were on the construction site daily. Among them were the employees of Mamisoa, but also some villagers and, of course, the five members from PRÉCI. To encourage the local community and create a sense of belonging toward the project, the PRÉCI team purchased their building supplies locally and recruited villagers for temporary jobs.



The construction of the building was not an easy task. Acquiring the needed materials was the most restrictive element because Ambatofotsy is a village completely isolated. It can only be reached by way of a narrow country road, hardly accessible during the rainy season. In all, five fully loaded 40-tonne trucks were needed to bring the necessary building materials and equipment, from the Capital, Antananarivo, to the village. According to Mamisoa, the contractor: “a project like this one is realized within five or six months, but thanks to the members of PRÉCI, most of the work was completed in only three months.”

This medical center uses solar energy. In fact, an electric system composed of four solar panels and six batteries allows the building to function for a period of three days without sunshine. Moreover, a container filled with medical equipment and medication offered by *International Health Collaboration (CSI)* was delivered to Ambatofotsy; the center was thus completely furnished and operational. Each room is equipped with Canadian products of superior quality.

The project ended on December 14, 2017, when the *Medical Center PRÉCIS Saint Anne* was inaugurated. That event, up to this very day, was the greatest feast organized in the Ambatofotsy village; approximately four-hundred people assembled to celebrate and it will remain ever present in their minds.

Finally, the PRÉCI team wishes to thank the Congregation of the MIC Sisters for their warm welcome. An enormous thank you to Sr. Jeanne Marthe and Sr. Victorine, responsible for the project, who helped us tremendously in the planning stage which began as early as January 2017. Without their numerous initiatives and many steps taken before realizing such a project, this medical center would not have come to be any time soon. Thank you to Sr. Robine who took care of the finances. Furthermore, three Sisters were present on the site to prepare the meals and make sure the team had all it needed. Thank you to Sr. Jeanne-Odet for her scrumptious biscuits (she is an excellent cook), and Sr. Noro who sees to the school and Sr. Sylvana, a young M.I.C. who started her mission at Ambatofotsy at the same time as we did. We also wish to thank all the other MIC Sisters who assisted at the inauguration and helped us put a finishing touch to the medical center and the celebration. Your presence touched us deeply more so because we know how extremely busy you all are. We are profoundly grateful! Thank you to all the MIC Sisters who welcomed us in their respective houses; we were welcomed like kings and queens at Antananarivo, Antsirabe, Morondava and of course, Ambatofotsy. Thank you for your hospitality, for your work and dedication to the Malagasy community. 🌿



Éric Desautels

Summer Fun

¹ Elisabeth Dorier-Apprill, Abel Kouvouama and Christophe Apprill. *Vivre à Brazzaville*, Paris, Karthala, 1998, p. 76; Phyllis M. Martin. *Loisirs et Société à Brazzaville pendant l'ère coloniale*, Paris, Karthala, 2006, p. 140-141.

² Source: [s.a.], *L'Œuvre des terrains de jeux*, L'Œuvre des tracts, Montreal, n° 200, February 1939.

³ A.G.M.Afr, *Diaire de la Maison du Pont-de-Québec*, 14 July 1950, p. 45

⁴ [s.a.], « Soirée missionnaire aux Loisirs St-Germain », *Le Progrès du Golfe*, 15 November 1963, p. 7

The summer season is a special and long-awaited time for many people. It's the time for vacation, relaxation and fun. While modern societies focus on tourism, homecoming or outdoor activities, some focus more on having fun, playing sports or discovering new hobbies.

I have found, in recent interviews with missionaries from different congregations, that leisure activities like soccer, knitting or crafts are important in their adopted countries. I asked myself, "What are the sports and activities that they themselves practice? What are their summer activities? How can they share their passions with the people here and abroad?"

SPORTS AND LEISURE ENTHUSIASTS

Sports and leisure bring out a sense of unity and community. Hoping to bring people together, missionaries have contributed to the emergence of

collective recreation. Recent research shows how the *Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)* participated in the "mass spread" of football (known as soccer in North America) in the Congo in the 1920s.¹ By practicing this sport, the first missionaries who arrived in this African country were able to share their knowledge of the game and popularize football (even though it is not the only sport that has been shared and popularized by them). In Asia, Canadian missionaries shared basketball, which is now very popular.

However, some men and women who go on missions are not always passionate about team sports. Some of them instead share their love of sewing, DIY (do it yourself) projects, clothing and jewelry making, or even share their love of reading by creating book clubs. These hobbies are always popping up in stories from these religious men and women. A Sister recently told me how sharing her hobbies with young Africans made her happy and had a positive impact on those around her. She showed these young Africans how to craft utilitarian or decorative objects from recycled materials. In fact, this example is not unique. Many activities like this have continued

in mission countries even after the departure of the Catholic missionaries.

Throughout history, missionaries have practiced their hobbies even when visiting or temporarily staying in Canada. They do not hide away to enjoy their hobbies; they also include lay people in their activities. Take, for example, the *Œuvre des terrains de jeux*, (playgrounds) which offered a range of sports and summer activities to young Quebecois Catholics until the 1960s. During the week dedicated to missions, the missionaries presented films and shared their passions for singing, sports, drawing, etc.

In 1964, at the Eastview Scholasticate, the *Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)* began plumbing



The chapel at Park Victoria, where the first playground (*Œuvre des terrains de jeux*) took place in 1929.²

classes, film screenings and even established a type of convenience store in their free time. Concerning the seventh art (system to classify art in general) the missionaries were interested in cinema ever since its popularization in the 1940s and 1950s. For example, in their Diary from the House of Pont-de-Québec, it is stated that at the start of the 1950s many films were watched by their members in training or who were traveling through Canada. The subjects were very diverse: from a documentary about the *Korean War* to films such as *Luxury Liner*, *The Thief of Bagdad* and *Latin Lovers*... even a documentary on pedestrian safety.³ The participants' film interests were as varied as their hobbies!

Other religious would share their favourite hobbies. In 1963, in Saint-Germain-de-Kamouraska, Father Jean-René Côté, (White Father) organized a "missionary night" where a film about missions, or a bingo, card games and discussions about fishing would take place.⁴ What a great way to gather the community and share your love of life.

From yesterday to today, religious men and women have shared their love of sports and leisure activities with a wide range of people. Beyond their missionary objectives, they have taken the time to live life to the fullest, and these activities have brought together local communities. This summer, why not follow their example and live our passions without hesitating to share them with the people around us. ∞



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Work of Hope in Haiti



Mésina Paulémon, M.I.C.

Sister Mésina was born in Potino, Haiti. After completing a bachelor's degree in pastoral theology at the University of Sherbrooke, she enthusiastically dedicated herself to her country's Church. But she soon realized that distributing spiritual bread was not enough. She began to offer the women of Haiti means of subsistence to help develop their self-esteem.

FINDING SPIRITUAL BREAD

I'm currently in Haiti, helping people with their material problems, but also helping them find spiritual bread. My tools are the new evangelization and catechesis. I'm very happy to pursue this mission for the Haitian Church in collaboration with the Diocesan Directors. At the request of Bishop Chibly Langlois, President of Haiti's Bishops' Conference, and Director Father Romel Eustache, I was named office coordinator for the National Catechetical Commission. I collaborate with the priests responsible for catechism in the country's ten dioceses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CATECHISTS

During our bi-monthly meetings, we discuss our parish experiences and we try to find the best methods to efficiently transmit the message, guidelines, and orientations. My goal is to build a Church that is fully alive. I also meet students from Notre-Dame Seminary to raise their awareness on the importance of training good catechists for the parishes. I teach catechesis to first and second-year theology seminarians from the ten dioceses. I offer the same courses to Brothers and Sisters in training at the Inter-Institutes of Religious Formation Center (CIFOR).

RECRUITING NEW CHRISTIANS

In the Christian community I belong to, many people attend the celebration of the Eucharist. It's a vibrant community with a lovely missionary dimension. In 2012-2013, to mark the year of faith, I asked members of this community to put into practice their spiritual commitment in their neighbourhood. Many were able to recruit children, young people, and adults and, thanks to their convincing words, lead them to Church to receive the sacraments (baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage).

The people who answered my call were filled with joy when they found people who had drifted away from the Church, ready to come back with hope. They accompanied their recruits with kindness, invited them to catechism, and sometimes even paid for their books. Every Sunday, all registered individuals receive catechism lessons, either after Mass or in the afternoon, as the group wishes.

STAYING ON THE PATH

Every year, the non-baptized can receive the sacrament of baptism during the Easter Vigil. As adults, they must prepare for this joyful moment. The first communion usually takes place in June. Afterwards, mentors guide them to help them prepare for their confirmation. Journeying with them is challenging, as the Church needs men and women with mature faith.

SOCIAL PASTORAL CONCERNS

In the three hundred fifty slums found around Port-au-Prince, many people live in suffering and misery due to poor economic and social conditions. There's no work, and consequently, the country is losing its educated youth; out of one hundred university graduates, eighty-four go abroad. What can we do to stop this trend? A policy must be implemented without delay that recognizes our youths' skills.

THE DÉLIA TEACHING CENTRE

Many underprivileged individuals celebrate their faith in the Christian community. I occasionally visit them, accompanied by one or two colleagues, and listen as they unburden themselves of their problems. We meet women with big ideas, who have personal projects, families, and children; but they're poor and without work. What can be done? We see their misery and hear their complaints. These visits inspired me to establish the Délia Center, a teaching center where women can learn how to cook and bake. Some make meat pies and sell them in their schools, or bake cakes for special events; others have opened restaurants. The Institution Mère Délia provides them with a classroom. The MIC community fully supports this project, but unfortunately, the financial resources are limited.

SOLIDARITY AND COLLABORATION

At the start of the program, sixteen women showed up, determined to take part in this experience. They showed great solidarity and complicity throughout the program. These brave



women shared what they had. We witnessed their collaboration, mutual support, and successful learning. When they received what they needed for a recipe, they expressed their gratitude. They discovered their culinary skills and learned how to make good meals with the ingredients they had on hand.

We were overjoyed to achieve our goal. Even before the end of the courses, these women had begun to plan and test out recipes, both independently and as a group, because many recipes required special materials, space, and an oven. They were thrilled when we suggested they make food for an event. This group of women prepared and catered the reception that was served after our Sister Emmanuela's funeral.

We concluded the program on July 19, 2017; the project was a success and we thanked the Lord with a Eucharistic celebration bringing together the entire Christian community. After Mass, everyone was invited to enjoy a hearty meal prepared by the women of the community. 🌿

PHOTOS: ¹ The joy of learning ² Sr. Mésina gives courses
³ The graduates / Photos Credit: MIC

In Haiti, the people live shattering situations which affect them deeply. Whether living in poverty, or stricken by natural cataclysm, or dealing with daily conflicts, the person who lives these traumas sometimes has difficulty seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Sister Micheline Joseph, school directress, lived through heartwrenching situations and came to realize that beyond her religious training and being an educator, she needed a solid formation in psychology. Given the proper tools and knowledge she could help others come to grips with themselves; a person's journey is always a complex and delicate matter.

The Path of Being



**Marie-Paule
Sanfaçon, M.I.C.**

Sr. Marie-Paule: Before approaching the main topic, tell me, Sr. Micheline, how you came to know the MIC Sisters and what made you decide to offer your life to God as did Délia Tétreault?

Sr. Micheline: I was raised in Cap-Haïtien and though I had never met the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, I often heard about them. I came to know them during my studies at the Teacher Training Center (*École Normale Supérieure*). After graduation, I taught at a school run by Brothers, in Trou-du-Nord, a town where the MIC Sisters had a school for girls. One day, Sr. Léa Nelson invited me to a session which helped me to reflect on my life choices.

The warm welcome I received from the Sisters immediately touched me and I discovered a spiritual family link with their Foundress, Délia Tétreault. Leaving for a lifetime, living to make Jesus known, to be a missionary in Thanksgiving, all these realities attracted me. Without hesitation and in a generous surge I responded “yes”; my choice then became clear.

Sr. Marie-Paule: In 1992, you joined the MICs; when your religious formation was completed, where did you want to go and what were you planning to do?

Sr. Micheline: Deep in my heart, I had two countries in mind for my mission: Japan, a non-Christian country where I wished to make Christ known; also, Canada, in gratitude for all the Sisters who came to Haiti, my homeland. However, at the end of my religious training, I was mandated to leave for Taiwan and though it has not yet materialized, I still wish to go someday. But for now, I see the necessity of my work as an educator in Haiti. Moreover, I decided to further my knowledge in psychology by taking courses in PRH (*Personality and Human Relations*).

Sr. Marie-Paule: What has led you to take the PRH formation?

Sr. Micheline: I always had a deep desire to help the Haitians take charge of their own destiny. I believe this is a calling rooted within me, a gift I have which was confirmed by some specialists during courses I took in the past. I have had to manage difficult conflicting situations between parents and teachers, parents and children and I did not feel I had adequate tools to help them find solutions to the problems... Thanks to PRH, I acquired the knowledge and tools which gave me



Sr. Micheline Joseph / Photo Credit: M.-P. Sanfaçon

self-confidence. I wanted to live social relations in a harmonious way and find my place in doing so. This formation takes into account the 'person' with her limits and her strengths.

Sr. Marie-Paule: I imagine you had many situations when you had to help people understand themselves, encouraging them to take their place in society?

Sr. Micheline: In my milieu, I meet many students who confide in me their problems and I try the best I can to help them. I can share with you a particular case: The husband of a woman kidnapped her three children and took them with him to Morocco. It is only a few years later that she was able to go there with the hope of finding her children. Unfortunately, her husband had deliberately pitted the children against their mother; they had been brain washed. Since it was impossible for her to restore the situation, she came back home. It's at this point in her life that

I met her and helped her. After a long personal journey via *PRH* she has rediscovered an inner freedom, she has a job and now looks into the future with serenity.

I gave a formation session to teenagers and it was a joy for them as well as for me; they discovered their psychological strengths, improved their self-esteem, developed a positive image of themselves, and got in touch with their inner beauty.

The global situation in Haiti is alarming and I cannot stand idly. First, we must form the youth's conscience, develop a sense of confidence in themselves and in others. To change a mentality, education is indispensable, we must see ahead and put in the necessary efforts. Nowadays, there is a high level of individualism and corruption; many think only of becoming wealthy at the expense of the other. We must take matters at hand and show social solidarity. Hopefully, we will be able to trust our new president. I remain optimistic because the more I know who I am, the more I pursue my way, the more I will be able to help others grow in their own personal way. 🌸

Our Hearts Are Restless

Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.



The six group leaders and Sr. Cecilia / Photo Credit: Jason Wong

What are our youth searching for today?

We often think of youth as a group of youngsters who search constantly for pleasure and entertainments. And yet we are unaware that deep in their hearts they are 'restless'. They are 'restlessly' searching for their identity, the meaning of their existence, the need to belong and be accepted. However due to a lack of proper guidance and support, many derail along the way and follow addictive behaviors and develop multiple personality and emotional disorders. Our youth needs our caring support and guidance. Youth are delightful, generous, passionate, dynamic and full of possibilities. They are gifted but fragile. Like 'seedlings' they need 'good soil and loving care' in order to bloom and blossom. This is why St. John Paul II had grasped deeply the needs of our youth and started World Youth Day. Since then, millions of youth have been affected and changed the course of their life. The impact of WYD has imprinted Christ in the core of their heart.

An opportunity for personal and spiritual uplifting

Every year the Chinese Catholic Youth of East/West coasts of Canada, hold living camps during the Labor Day weekend for youth age 17-36. They are known as *East/West Canadian Chinese Catholic Living Camp (ECCCLC or WCCCLC)*. Instead

of taking the Labor Day holidays for fun, they willingly leave all behind and pay a good sum of money to 'Rest in God and be with other youths'. This certainly is the work of the Holy Spirit in the depths of their beings.

I had the joy of accompanying the Ottawa Chinese Catholic Youth to several ECCCLC some thirty years ago. Never thought that I would be invited again, in 2017, by the leaders of the 41st ECCCLC to accompany 160 youth during their camp days in Harriburton, Ontario. These youth came from different universities and parishes of Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and other parts of Ontario. What is striking for me is to see that almost 40% of the participants today are Chinese immigrants from mainland China. The Spirit has certainly reached out to all youth and continues to lead them to Christ.

Catholic youth leaders prepare the ground

Six dynamic and committed leaders were elected in 2016 from different parts of Ontario and Montreal to take up the huge responsibility of organizing the event. Yet their unfailing efforts, their unwavering dedication and their spirit of communion made them surpass all difficulties and challenges. Their enthusiasm and teamwork has made the year's camp a memorable event for Henry, Christine, Felicia, Sr. Cecilia, Linna, Tony &



41st East Canadian Chinese Catholic Living Camp (ECCCLC) 2017, Harriburton, Ontario / Photo Credit: Jason Wong (via drone)

Pui Tak. Their work has been a real success. I like to quote a few of their personal reflections:

Henry Chau: “I like to think that God has really taken care of me through this entire journey. So I came with an open heart to meet new friends, but most importantly, came here ready to experience God.”

Christine Wong: “It’s not just the friendships we make here, that defines it. It’s the friendships we make in God! It is absolutely incredible.”

Felicia Ho: “I was particularly touched by overnight adoration and singing. It was like a pull in my heart, drawing me closer to God.”

Linna Lin: “God has his plan for everything, and the only thing I need to do is open my heart to him and say: ‘God I’m here!’ Trust in him! Always remember to take action for God’s will, and try your best. God is always there for us.”

Tony Lee: “Sometimes all we need is a little fear and a big push to do great things. Since I gave Him control, He has never ceased to amaze me. God will surely find a way to reach you when nobody can. Say ‘Yes’ to Him whenever you have a chance.”

Pui Tak Chan: “I cannot say that I am very spiritual or faithful, however, I am grateful that God has given me this opportunity to waste my time... I mean meaningful time with you and God.”

Our hearts are restless — until they rest in you, O Lord!

This year’s conference speaker was Fr. Hansoo Antonio Park, a dynamic Korean priest, Chaplain at the University of Toronto. He developed the theme into five conferences: **WE ARE MADE FOR A REASON — MADE FOR MORE — MADE FOR THE ONE — MADE FOR THE TEMPLE — MADE FOR HOLINESS.** His simple but profound presentations touched the hearts of all the campers. It gave them a clear Vision and Mission to pursue. It helped them discover the presence of God in their life and made their hearts burn with fire. Their openness towards each other also helped them to pour out their joys and sufferings with each other, creating a lasting bonding.

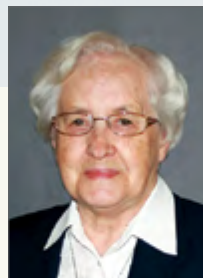
During all the liturgical celebrations especially during Taizé prayer night, the youth sang and praised God with all their hearts. Their voices were surely lifted up to heaven. The summit of all experiences was the Sacrament of Reconciliation and a whole night of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Their thirst for God led them into deep encounters with God. This uplifting spiritual experience has certainly created a solid place for God in the core of their hearts. Their joy and fervor were radiant and powerful. ***So come all youth of today, God is awaiting eagerly to meet you.*** ∞

With You, O Lord



Monique Préfontaine, M.I.C.
(*Sr. Monique-du-Sauveur*)
1933-2017
Beloeil, Quebec

When she entered the novitiate in 1952, Sr. Monique was receptive and ready to serve; little did she know the many responsibilities that were in store for her. She first served as a missionary in Madagascar but then, important challenges came her way. Thanks to her listening ability, her welcoming attitude, and the gift of self she became Superior General of the Institute for a period of twelve years. Then, with two other Sisters, she organized the international Scolasticate; later, she went to Rome to edit the *Positio* in view of our Foundress' beatification. In 2008, she received a diagnosis: Alzheimer's Disease was looming on the horizon. In a spirit of faith, Sr. Monique continued living her life; without warning she left us on December 2017. "Lord Jesus, receive her in your eternal abode... she was our friend".



Gabrielle Michaud, M.I.C.
(*Sœur Gabriel-de-l'Immaculée*)
1924-2017
Plessisville, Quebec

Sister Gabrielle, was the fifth child in a large family and she lived a happy childhood. In 1948, she joined her sister Lucile who had entered our novitiate. Shortly after her first profession she learned about the tragic death of her parents at Mount Obiou and she was terribly shaken by the news. However, she remained firm in her vocation and was mandated to Japan where she worked for forty-six years. Her Marian devotion supported her multiple and varied responsibilities as superior, accountant, as well as in the kitchen, in sewing. No matter the task, Sr. Gabrielle was always welcoming, gentle, humble, discreet, serene, peaceful and efficient. Dear Sister, on December 8, when you joined the Blessed ones in the Father's Kingdom, "a star was born in the heavens". Magnificat!



Jeanne d'Arc Corriveau, M.I.C.
(*Sœur St-Serge*)
1926-2017
St-Sébastien, Quebec

Jeanne d'Arc was ten years old when her twin sister died; a terrible blow for the whole family and her sibling. During her school years she often thought of her vocation; she entered the MIC novitiate in 1948. At twenty-seven, Sr. Jeanne d'Arc's dream came true and she was welcomed in Malawi, Africa. Her numerous apostolic works were successful thanks to her ingenuity upheld by prayer, audacity, and unconditional love. Besides being a teacher and catechist, Sr. Jeanne d'Arc studied nursing. She was a devoted nurse committed to pastoral health care in hospitals and community health services. Dear Sister, the Lord Jesus searched for someone who would work in His vineyard to reap the spiritual harvest and you were among the chosen ones. May you be eternally blessed.



Simonne Perreault, M.I.C.
(*Sœur Marie-Eugène*)
1921-2017
Lachevrotière, Quebec

Sister Simonne entered our novitiate in 1944 and went to Cuba in 1952; education was her field of work. During the Cuban revolution, she remained there with ten other Sisters. Since a religious presence in the schools was no longer tolerated the apostolate had to be readjusted. She went to villages, encouraging people in their faith, she welcomed people and taught catechesis, she trained team leaders among married couples and the sick. When Sr. Simonne left Cuba after forty-years of intense apostolic work, the Bishop said: *We are losing a great and precious missionary*. Upon her return to Quebec, Sr. Simonne continued her mission work proclaiming the Good News to the Cuban population in Florida and New-Jersey. On December 31, 2017, she serenely left us for her eternal mission. Dear Sister, may you be eternally happy.



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