

MIC MISSION NEWS

VOL. 52, Nº 4 | OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2025



To sow seeds of joy and hope! — Since 1923

*100 Years
of an Undaunted Mission*

A photograph of Pope Francis, dressed in white, waving his right hand to a large, enthusiastic crowd. Many people in the crowd are holding up their smartphones to take pictures. The scene is bright and sunny.

PATHS TO THE FUTURE

PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS 2025

OCTOBER

For collaboration between different religious traditions. Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice and human fraternity.

NOVEMBER

For the prevention of suicide. Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

DECEMBER

For Christians in areas of conflict. Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Masses for readers' intentions offered in the following countries:

January: **Canada** • February: **Cuba**
March: **Philippines** • April: **Haiti**
May: **Canada** • June: **Bolivia**
July: **Malawi** and **Zambia**
August: **Hong Kong** and **Taiwan**
September: **Madagascar**
October: **Peru** • November: **Japan**
December: **Canada**

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Pope Leo XIV and young people.
From July 28 to August 3, 2025,
one million pilgrims from
some 146 countries came to
meet the pontiff in Rome.
Photo: Shutterstock

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BEGGARS OF THE FUTURE



M.I.C. Participants at the 2025 Institute Council. Photo: M.I.C.



By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

At first glance, the title of this editorial may seem surprising. However, upon reflection, it proves to be fitting. On this earth, we are beggars of hope, peace, joy, and health... Life does not truly belong to us: it is lent to us to fulfill our vocation according to the will of the Lord. Thus, it is necessary to pause, meditate, and make the decisions that are required.

FOR US

This is especially true for a missionary community. Every five years, the superiors of our provinces around the world, along with those responsible for forming the sisters of tomorrow, gather to consider future challenges and provide guidance that aligns as faithfully as possible with the charism of thanksgiving bequeathed by our foundress, Délia Tétreault. It is a great joy to meet, share our work, and reflect on the paths ahead.

FOR THE CHURCH

Recently, Pope Leo XIV brought together many young people from different countries to encourage them to engage with the world and make their lives meaningful. He urged them to adopt a proactive approach and to thoughtfully consider their personal choices.

The Holy Father also encouraged them to reflect on the purpose of their existence in order to contribute to the betterment of society, especially in the face of challenges such as violence, drugs, or discouragement. He exhorted them to be bearers of hope and to act in ways that create a better world.

BEGGARS OF THE FUTURE

Every person on earth cares about securing a bright future. The future does not belong to us, but we are responsible for it. We devise many plans that might bring us joy if realized. We are somewhat like the rich fool in the Gospel who builds new barns to store a great harvest. Yet the Lord tells him: *Today your life will be demanded of you.* The future is always uncertain. An unexpected event can disrupt everything and challenge our plans. An accident can happen in an instant. What then remains of all our beautiful projects?

Each article in this publication invites deep reflection and whispers quietly to us: Life does not belong to us; we are all beggars of the future...

Enjoy reading!

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.



Paths to the Future?

Photo: Shutterstock



By Sylvie Bessette

What will the future be made of? What does tomorrow hold for us? These are questions that have haunted humanity since the world began. Prehistoric humans wondered where they would find their next meal. Men and women of the Middle Ages asked where the next epidemic would come from. The people of the Renaissance speculated about looming wars. Modern societies were torn over the question of whether capitalism or communism would dominate humanity. And postmodern communities? They wonder who will launch the super bomb that will annihilate several countries in one swift blow, who will put democracy to death and govern by decree (that one, we already know!), who will seek to conquer their neighbour through an endless war (him too, we know — he speaks Russian), and who will try to prevent a people from existing and having a sovereign state to call their own (Israel? Indeed!).

UNCERTAINTY AND THE QUEST FOR ANSWERS

Uncertainty has always caused concern. That is why occult sciences, divination, and the reading of signs — whether in palm lines, the zodiac, tea leaves, or

tarot — have always been popular. Alchemy, witchcraft, and magic were also sought after, as long as people believed they could possess ancient knowledge and the power to influence the future. But can we truly predict the future, which does not yet exist?

TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSHUMANISM

We now have tools that help us work faster. Artificial intelligence conducts research for us, composes music, writes theses, and creates humanoid characters (in our own image?). Some billionaires invest in transhumanism, an intellectual movement that promotes the radical enhancement of human capacities — including memory, reduced aggression, and more — attempting to mask human flaws and compensate for limitations through technology.

Are these truly paths to the future? After significantly improving living conditions on Earth — in health, work, and human rights — are we now ready to modify the very nature of humanity? Who will judge the validity of these new forms of knowledge and their use? Ethicists will have plenty of work ahead!

HOPE AND CHRISTIAN HOPE

The theme *Paths to the Future*, chosen for the autumn 2025 edition *MIC Mission News*, raises many questions. We have mentioned a few of them. But underlying all these concerns is one key notion: what role does hope play in all this? And even more, where does Christian hope stand among all these new trends?

Théo, l'encyclopédie catholique pour tous, draws a clear distinction: *Hope is human. It relies on analysis. [...] Christian hope rests on God's Promise, the certainty of having been chosen by Him, out of love*¹. We have discussed hope in the past four issues of the magazine, on the occasion of this jubilee year, whose theme was chosen by the late Pope Francis. Reflecting on paths to the future brings us back to this cardinal virtue.

The perspective of Hope is shaped by looking at the Crucifix: it proclaims death and transforms it into a sign of resurrection. It accepts anxiety, yet remains at peace...

*Between reality and the Promise arises a quality of being, a true dynamism that resists failure*².

Thus, we can hope that all the power of artificial intelligence will serve humanity. But Christian hope encourages us to wish that all these new possibilities of knowledge contribute to the fulfillment of God's Kingdom, making humanity true children of God, in service of the Good News of the Gospel. The idea of hope evokes the view of the glass as half full rather than half empty. But Christian hope is lived deeply; it underpins our faith in a loving God who will never abandon us, in Jesus who will carry us on His shoulders in our moments of discouragement, and in the Holy Spirit who will guide our steps through dark paths.

The future will inevitably come. But how we live what it holds depends on our Christian hope. 🌿

¹ Translation of text from *Théo, l'encyclopédie catholique pour tous*, Paris, Mame, p. 888. ² *Ibid*.



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Sisters Noelline, Eliane, Hanta, Augustine and Nadya. Photos: M.I.C.

The Village of Ambatofotsy

By the M.I.C. of Madagascar

Ambatofotsy, which literally means *the white stone* in Malagasy, is located 75 kilometres from the town of Tsiroanomandidy, in the Bongolava region of Madagascar. The village, situated west of the Highlands, in an area with irregular terrain ranging from 700 to 2,800 metres in altitude, is today among the most authentic lands of the "Great Island." Considered the historical and cultural heart of the country, the Highlands host several traditional ceremonies held amid landscapes of pine and eucalyptus forests, rice paddies, and granite peaks.

More locally, the villagers of Ambatofotsy live mainly from organic farming and raising *zebu*, the emblematic

animal of the country. The population numbers about 3,800 inhabitants, more than half of whom are children. Unfortunately, the lack of infrastructure hinders the development of this community.

THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION

Like Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth, one must cross mountains and valleys before reaching the M.I.C. community of Ambatofotsy. It is a remote, attractive, and endearing little paradise where the air is pure, but access remains difficult due to the poor quality of the roads.



Teachers and students. Photo: M.I.C.

The mission began in 2012 with farming, reforestation, and the planting of fruit trees. At first, the Sisters lived in a house offered by a generous family. The welcome was warm and the people very kind. That same year, a new residence was under construction. On December 18, 2013, Bishop Gustavo Bombín Espino of the diocese came to inaugurate the convent. The community was very happy to finally have a home. In 2019, a second residence was built next to the first one, and Sisters quickly moved in.

SAINT JOSEPH COLLEGE

Before the arrival of the Sisters in July 2011, the Saint Joseph Primary School of Ambatofotsy already existed, under the direction of Mrs. Ranome Germaine. At that time, teachers relied on multilevel teaching in cramped spaces in the churchyard. After purchasing a piece of land belonging to the M.I.C. and with the bishop's authorization, a more suitable school building was constructed, and the pupils were transferred there. At present, four classrooms, including the church, host the students.

In 2013, Sr. Véronique Olga Rasoanirina took over the leadership of the school. Two years later, under the direction of Sr. Miriama Ranoroosa, secondary classes were ready. The school received official authorization to open under the name of *Saint Joseph College*. The number of students rose from 70 to 465, though it has fluctuated in subsequent years. This decrease is due to a resurgence of banditry and zebu theft that terrify people in the area, combined with the growing impoverishment of this rural population.

INSECURITY REIGNS IN THE VILLAGE. EVERY EVENING, AS SOON AS NIGHT FALLS, ALL LIGHTS MUST BE TURNED OFF.

In reality, insecurity reigns in the village. Every evening, as soon as night falls, all lights must be turned off. Teachers and students must adapt to this measure, which affects lesson preparation and homework. Fear is constant. Recruiting teachers therefore remains a great challenge. The school must accept those who present themselves and agree to precarious salary conditions. Indeed, the irregular payment of school fees, both in cash and in kind, directly affects the remuneration of teachers.

PRÉCI SAINTE-ANNE MEDICAL CENTRE

The PRÉCI Sainte-Anne Medical Centre, a non-profit organization established by Canadian students from the École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS) in Montreal, was inaugurated on February 18, 2018. Managed by our community, the Centre aims to meet the needs of the villagers. It provides the following services: outpatient consultation, prenatal and postnatal consultation, obstetric ultrasound, childbirth, vaccination, and hospitalization.

Since 2020, the Centre has received about 214,000 patients, of whom 89% required hospitalization. Of these, 45% were pediatric cases. Moreover, women are hospitalized more frequently than men (34% versus 10%). We have also observed a growing number of patients from disadvantaged backgrounds.

MOST PATIENTS TRAVEL BETWEEN 30 AND 70 KILOMETRES TO REACH THE CENTRE, USUALLY BY BICYCLE OR ON FOOT.

At present, the Centre has only one hospitalization room for all categories of patients. However, the number of patients requiring observation is increasing daily. Those suffering from contagious infections must be isolated. Most patients travel between 30 and 70 kilometres to reach the Centre, usually by bicycle or on foot. During the rainy season, river floods make travel especially difficult. Furthermore, the Bongolava region is classified as a “red zone” (a local term referring to areas where the government exercises only minimal control) due to *zebu* thefts carried out by the *dahalo*—the local word for bandits.

Appel Détresse, a French humanitarian association, provides multiple donations, including medical equipment and food for the most disadvantaged. In this rural region, the Centre helps compensate for the lack of resources at the public health centre by raising awareness among pregnant



Builders of the Sainte-Anne Medical Centre: Thomas Cardinal, Annabelle Boinet, Jean-Simon Forest, Janick Lavoie, and Pascal Pelletier-Dubé. Photo: M.I.C.

women about the importance of prenatal consultations. About 60 visits take place each month. Very often, pregnant women turn to traditional midwives who recommend herbal drinks to speed up labour, which has harmful effects on both mother and child. Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and other pregnancy-related pathologies are on the rise, leading to an increase in fetal distress during pregnancy monitoring, before delivery, or during labour. Between five and ten babies each month suffer from such fetal distress. Emergency monitoring is therefore necessary for both baby and mother. Of note, it takes four hours by car to access the required monitoring.

WELCOME HELP

For the past three years, we have maintained an intensive and serious collaboration with the Mérieux Foundation in supporting mothers and children. On February 15, the Centre inaugurated a new building with facilities adapted to the community, including a laboratory, a delivery room, a guard room, a pediatric observation room, and a space for those accompanying pregnant women.

Thanks to its boundless generosity, *Pharmacie humanitaire internationale* (PHI Atlantique) is another essential partner. This association donated an ultrasound machine and also plans to provide laboratory equipment. How could we not thank all our caring collaborators for so much attentive love! 🌿

Kindness:

A Path Toward the Future

In a world that seems to be growing increasingly chaotic, while politics among our American neighbours appears, for part of the electorate, to thrive on belligerent, authoritarian, and even cruel positions and actions, it is encouraging to see that good personal deeds still persist in our society. The research trip I took to Mexico in March 2025 demonstrated this to me on many levels. Acts of kindness and goodwill brightened my stay, and simply made possible my journey through this Spanish-speaking country.

By Maurice Demers

Given my situation, this trip involved major challenges. It was the first time I traveled by plane while using a wheelchair. My partner, Karine Boutin, accompanied me on this trip, and her assistance during the flight was indispensable. In fact, her help in Mexico also enabled me to get out of bed, wash, and dress to go about my daily activities outside the hotel. Her constant, caring attention toward me was among the first acts of kindness I experienced.

To make the trip possible, I carefully planned my outings. My movements around the city were made with the help of an adapted taxi that allowed me to board with my wheelchair. To facilitate mobility in the streets, at the universities where I was scheduled to speak, and at the archive centre where I intended to work, I rented a power wheelchair in Mexico City. Finally, Yves Solis, my Mexican colleague, also greatly supported me with the logistical aspects of my presentations at the universities. Thanks to his selfless help, I was able to present my research on Quebec missionaries and liberation theology in Spanish at the Universidad



Maurice and Karine on the plane for Mexico. Photo: Karine Boutin Maurice

Iberoamericana on March 25. I also had the chance to lead a discussion in Spanish on March 27 with about thirty students from the Prepa Ibero, an institution just outside the city in the neighbouring state, on attitudes toward the Catholic religion in Western society.

It was no surprise that these institutions made an extra effort to properly welcome a visiting professor. I was, however, pleasantly surprised by the accessibility measures in place to simplify the lives of people with disabilities: wide, aesthetically pleasing ramps, numerous and spacious adapted restrooms, and elevators

well-positioned to avoid excessively long wheelchair routes. There are indeed lessons that Quebec institutions could learn from this...

While working at the National General Archives in Mexico, I also noticed how well this public institution accommodated people with disabilities. At all times, an employee or a police officer on site was quick to offer assistance. It is true, of course, that they were on duty.

KINDNESS AND GENTLENESS

The trip also gave me the chance to witness completely selfless acts of kindness. On my way to a liked bookstore in Mexico City, I was saddened to discover upon arrival that it was not accessible — there were four or five steps to climb before reaching the entrance. In what felt almost like a biblical turn of events, a belt vendor sitting on the pavement at the edge of the street insisted he could lift my wheelchair up the steps. When I explained that the electric chair was extremely heavy, he didn't hesitate; immediately, three other men passing by joined him, and together they lifted me to the entrance of the bookstore. After about thirty minutes browsing the shelves, the street vendor was waiting for me with others to help carry me back down.

This assistance — marked by immense kindness from complete strangers — came with absolutely no expectation of anything in return. For the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, kindness flows from the ability to put oneself in another's place. For Emmanuel Kant, benevolence, a notion



Visiting a bookstore. Photo: Karine Boutin Maurice

similar to kindness, is a moral ideal to strive for. Helping others, caring for them, or bringing them joy without expecting anything in return are actions that demonstrate respect, but also a certain strength of character. Kindness, in this sense, must not be confused with weakness. It is a path toward the future — one that would ensure a more human tomorrow. 🌀



Maurice during his lecture at the University. Photo: Karine Boutin Maurice

A Path of Humility

In a recent issue of *MIC Mission News*, Rachel Duplessis recounted her pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, a journey that was a true *path of transformation* for her¹. Like Ms. Duplessis, many travelers from around the world testify to a radical change in their lives following this long walk. However, sometimes the road holds profound surprises and takes unexpected detours. In her book *Ma grâce te suffit! : il était une fois... (My grace is sufficient for you! Once upon a time...)*², Ms. Maryse Cantin recounts her adventure.

By Marie-Claude Barrière

A TEENAGE DREAM

In June 2016, on the eve of her 50th birthday, Ms. Cantin also decided to set off on the Camino de Santiago with her backpack. Like many others, she had been thinking about it for a long time. The first 10 days of the expedition with her husband went smoothly. Then, after 200 kilometres, in a small isolated village in Spain, the unthinkable happened: a local farmer was unloading bales of hay from his cart, and one of them, weighing about 500 kilograms, rolled over a low wall, veered off course, and crashed violently onto Ms. Cantin. Seriously injured in two places in her spinal cord, she was rushed to the hospital. As for Michel, her husband, who was walking ahead of her on the path, he escaped almost unscathed. Due to the language barrier, it fell to him to take on the thankless and painful task of sharing with her the doctor's diagnosis: the accident would leave her quadriplegic.



My grace is sufficient for you! Once upon a time...

So how can we avoid sinking into anger or despair? How can we accept such an upheaval in our lives? How can we avoid questioning our faith in such circumstances? Through God's grace. Through total surrender to the Father. Through deep faith.

A LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

From the outset, Ms. Cantin knew that the road ahead would be long and arduous. With a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from the University of Montreal and 27 years of experience as a rehabilitation occupational therapist, she was well aware of the effort required for her recovery.

During her 18 months of rehabilitation, it was the love and unwavering support of her family, friends, and especially her husband that guided her along the way. Of course, the couple had to adapt to this new reality and become increasingly open to dialogue. The walls came down, and communication became fluid. Against all odds, they did not go through the stages of grief: a sense of serenity set in right away. Together, they continued Michel's permanent diaconate training program, which led him to exercise this ministry in 2018. Life goes on.

SHE FELT DEEPLY THAT THE FATHER WOULD PROVIDE FOR ALL HER NEEDS, THAT HIS GRACE WAS WITH HER.

Strangely, three days before the tragedy, a song kept playing over and over in Ms. Cantin's head, one of the lines of which is taken from the second letter of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (12:9): *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*. Following this tragic event, she experienced this truth in her own flesh. She felt deeply that the Father would provide for all her needs, that his grace was with her and would accompany her every day of her life. At that moment, she made a true act of faith. That song became her viaticum.

EXEMPLARY SERENITY

When I think about it, what impresses me most about this story, apart from Ms. Cantin's resilience, of course, are the words she uttered almost immediately after the accident. Words of gratitude. She gave thanks for having retained her mental faculties.



Mrs. Maryse Cantin. Photo: Author's Archives

She gave thanks for being able *to see her children grow old and her grandchildren grow up*. No doubt each and every one of us asks ourselves the same questions: if the irreparable were to happen, would I have the same strength, the same wisdom, the same faith that moves mountains?

Ms. Cantin is undoubtedly a radiant, generous, and warm woman. Her smile and her eyes are shining proof of her inner peace. She knows that she can still spread hope around her. As she so aptly puts it, she wants to convey *God's overflowing love through her life*. Despite (or because of) this experience, *her hope has grown. Her trust in God has grown*.

As this year draws to a close and a new one begins, may we, like her, live in complete dependence on God, walk the path of humility and absolute trust that she embodies with such grace, with open *hearts and empty hands*. 🙏

¹ *The MIC Mission News*, Winter 2025, vol. 52, n° 1, p. 7.

² Translation of Maryse Cantin, « *Ma grâce te suffit!* » : *il était une fois...*, Trois-Rivières, Maryse Cantin, 2024, p. 126.

For a Better World



Pope Leo XIV. Photo: AP Photo/Domenico Stinellis

The election of a new Pope always brings transformation and renewal within the Church. Indeed, each individual carries personal traits and values that they gradually transmit to those around them. However, when it comes to the highest dignitary of the Catholic Church, the faithful expect meaningful renewal.

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

A COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND CHARITY

Pope Leo XIV expressed it this way: *The Church must return to the simplicity of the first Christians.* Such a decision was surely made after much reflection and prayer. He wishes to see fervent believers form a community of faith and charity, following the example of Christ, who was crucified out of love for humanity. He hopes that this commitment will be reflected in parish communities in order to build a world of peace, justice, and love.

The People of God have the necessary resources to create this land of fraternity and charity. Change begins with each of us, by transforming our hearts so that we become in solidarity with those who suffer or live in precarious conditions, especially those men and women forced to leave their homelands because of conflicts and wars.

A MISSION OF REAL COMMITMENT

This message, imbued with both simplicity and depth, resonates in the hearts of the faithful as a call to embody Christian values concretely in daily life. The Pope insists on the need not only to proclaim faith but also to live it fully through acts of generosity, justice, and love toward others. He invites every Christian to become a craftsman of peace and reconciliation, overcoming divisions and building bridges between communities.

This wish of Leo XIV is now in our hands, and it is up to us to fulfill it day by day. The Pope is not asking for the impossible; it is not a call to return to an age of austerity. Rather, it is a reaffirmation of faith in Christ, who gave His life for each and every one of us.

To bring this vision to life, he has implemented several initiatives, including the promotion of interreligious encounters to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding. He has also encouraged parishes worldwide to adopt local projects aimed at supporting people in precarious situations, caring for the environment, and strengthening bonds of solidarity. These actions reflect his call for a Church that serves the Gospel values of love and justice while responding to today's challenges.

A MISSION IN A SYNODAL CHURCH

Today, we live in a synodal Church, meaning that we have to listen to one another in pursuit of a shared commitment. We walk together in order to make decisions and to carry out the mission of Christ in our communities. In fact, a synodal Church fosters discernment, collaboration, and co-responsibility. The diversity of gifts is placed at the service of Christ's work in the world, which can be summed up in three words: communion, participation, and mission.

This synodal journey, though ambitious, reflects a living and engaged Church, ready to meet the challenges of our modern times. Faced with social, economic, and environmental upheavals, the Church under the Pope's guidance seeks to be a light of hope and action. Every baptized person, through his faith and talents, is called to build a world where human dignity and respect for creation prevail.


In this perspective, Leo XIV also invites us to rethink the role of young people within the Church. They are the builders of tomorrow, bearers of fresh ideas that can bring renewal. He has therefore issued a vibrant appeal for religious leaders, families, and communities to support them in their search for meaning and engagement. Forums, exchanges, and missions have been created to allow them to express themselves, to learn, and to become agents of change.

ONLY TOGETHER,
UNITED IN FAITH AND
CHARITY, CAN WE
BUILD COMMUNITIES
THAT ARE STRONG AND
FULL OF HOPE.

WITH DEEP CONVICTION

Thus, the synodal Church aspires not only to transform itself from within but also to become a beacon in society, a true force for the common good. It seeks to be a welcoming home, open to differences, always ready to extend a hand to those who are marginalized. This project, though vast, rests on a profound conviction: only together, united in faith and charity, can we build communities that are strong and full of hope.

May this call of Pope Leo XIV continue to resonate in the hearts of men and women of our time and inspire concrete actions to build a better future, faithful to the teachings of Christ and to the ideal of a humanity reconciled with itself and with its Creator.

May this appeal to generosity be heard. May we together offer our time—our precious time—to ease the needs of others: within our families, our neighbourhoods, our parishes, our Church. May this invitation to accomplish Christ's mission in our world become ours, leading us to be attentive to those around us and to those who suffer in silence. This mission is close at hand. It is ours to fulfill. 

Our Lady of Acadia

By Anne-Marie Forest

In his letter of February 11, 2022, addressed to Archbishop Rino Fisichella for the Jubilee of 2025, Pope Francis wrote: *We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision.*


On the occasion of this Holy Year, I created this painting for the parish of Notre-Dame de l'Acadie, located in the Diocese of Joliette. This representation is the fruit of a reflection that could be described as synodal, since it was carried out by a committee made up of parishioners together with Pastor Laurent Gouneau, who suggested important symbolic elements for its creation.

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE WORK

On this canvas, the walking figures illustrate a people forced to move because of the Deportation, whose faith carried them in hope—a model for present and future generations. It seemed important to me to represent Jesus walking with Mary, and not as the newborn child in her arms, for he is above all the first missionary on earth, sent by God to bear witness to his love for us. The Christian walks in the footsteps of Christ, who offers us the grace of journeying with him.

Anne-Marie Forest. June 2025. Joliette. *The work was created on canvas using an ancient oil painting technique. Made possible thanks to the participation of Paroisse Notre-Dame de l'Acadie and Institut Barthélémy Joliette.*





Our Lady of Acadia

Lord,
at the foot of the Cross,
you gave us your mother to guide us
like a star shining over the sea.

May her example of faith
and obedience to your word
remove all fear within us
and turn our gaze forward.

You who experienced exile
with Mary and Joseph,
make us strong in our trials
and welcoming to all those who
come from afar seeking a land of peace.

May your Spirit,
who descended upon Mary and the apostles,
inspire in us the words and actions
that foster unity and build fraternity.

Our Lady of Acadia,
pray for us.

Prayer from Louis Corriveau, Bishop of
Joliette, in the Jubilee Year 2025

The idea of clothing Mary and Jesus in costumes from another era is not new. Symbolically, these garments are inspired by Acadian history and culture. The white apron thus associates Mary with the Acadian women of the 18th century, but also with the humility of the mother and servant wearing a plain apron without lace. At the Annunciation, when the angel asks her to be the mother of the Saviour, does Mary not answer: *Here am I, the servant of the Lord?* The colours of her costume recall the traditional blue, but also those of the Acadian flag and those of Jesus' garment. A rosary hangs at her waist, with its cross clearly visible. The prayer of the rosary is part of Acadian spirituality. Mary's face is joyful without being euphoric, reflecting inner peace.

MANY SYMBOLS

Mary wears moccasins, highlighting the contribution of the Mi'kmaq people, whose solidarity enabled the Acadians to survive and walk this land. Near her, Jesus smiles. As in ancient representations, the child has long hair. The sleeves of his shirt are not wide, suggesting an economy of fabric.

The anchor on his chest is a symbol of early Christianity. It is associated with the cross, the fish, and the boat. Of course, for a seafaring people, it has its rightful place. (It also appears on the Jubilee logo.) Christ is an anchor to which we cling by the heart, with the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. This is why it hangs around the neck of the Child Jesus. The anchor thus takes on a far deeper meaning: that of hope founded on the cross of Christ and on his love.

AND MANY MORE

The halos, represented by a disc surrounding the heads of the two figures, indicate their holiness. That of Jesus contains a golden cross within the nimbus, as in icons, designating him as the Christ.

At the bottom of Mary's apron, the four fleurs-de-lis, like the four churches of the Saint-Jacques parish cluster, suggest her royalty. The fleur-de-lis is also a Trinitarian emblem and the symbol of Quebec.

Since the village is called Saint-Jacques, the shell is an essential and meaningful symbol. It is attached to the pilgrim's staff. Originally, it was the symbol of pilgrims and not exclusively associated with Santiago de Compostela, but with any journey toward a sanctuary.

On the far left of the painting, the flag of Acadia flies with its blue, white, and red colors and its star, symbol of Mary, star of the sea. It was adopted in 1884 during the Second Acadian National Convention held in Miscouche, Prince Edward Island. Here is what Father Marcel-François Richard declared: *An army needs a*

standard. The banner of the Assumption will, of course, be carried at the head of our religious processions with religious patriotism. [...] However, I would like Acadia to have a flag that reminds its children not only that they are French, but also that they are Acadian.



I therefore suggest, and propose to the delegates of this Convention, the following plan for the national flag: the tricolour flag as made would be that of Acadia, with in the blue part a star in papal colors. This star represents Mary, Stella Maris. This flag is now recognized as the symbol of the Acadian people in Canada and abroad.

Finally, at the feet of Jesus and his mother, the motto of Acadia: *L'union fait la force*, which means "Strength through Unity". This maxim is still relevant today, echoing the call to solidarity expressed for the world by Pope Francis. This union must be a spiritual strength for our society and for living together. For me, it highlights fraternity and the encounter of Churches within the parish of Notre-Dame de l'Acadie. 🌿

I support the mission by reading the magazine and making a donation.



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Our Youth and Pope Leo XIV

We must not despair. Our country has inexhaustible resources. The coming youth is admirable... One or two more generations like this one, and France will be saved.

— CHARLES PÉGUY, LETTER TO JOSEPH LOTTE, 1913



A young person proudly wearing his country's colours.

Photo: Marie Laliberté



By Emmanuel Bélanger

Hope is the virtue of the future, of the possible that materializes in what one believes can be realized. Here, one understands that hope and faith go hand in hand. Saint Paul says: *Faith allows us to possess what we hope for, it is a means of knowing realities that are unseen.* Faith and hope go together in this world; that is why they will not remain in eternal life, for they will be consumed in the charity that endures (cf. 1 Cor 13).

A youth without hope is already old. In fact, it is no longer a youth. Youth is a pledge to the future; it goes out to meet what is to come, what is about to happen. The One who comes to meet it is the One who makes possible the promise of hope. A youth without hope may still have self-confidence, but it will quickly wither, for it is not founded on rock, on what does not pass away, on the Ineffable who alone is worthy of faith and therefore of hope. Finally, if youth falls into lethargy and no longer dares to hope for the greatest Good, it sinks into anxiety, succumbs to all manner of fears, becomes gullible and frail. A youth without a future is the beginning of the end, humanity's condemnation, the tragedy fulfilled.

From late July to early August 2025, the Jubilee of Youth was held in Rome. A million pilgrims from all over the world, representing some 146 countries, flooded into the Eternal City in response to the call of the late Pope Francis and to meet his successor, Leo XIV. This youth on the move recalls the words of Péguy quoted above. Indeed, one or two more generations like it, and the Church will be saved — or at least her mission to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world will be assured.

DIALOGUE

During the prayer vigil on August 2 at Tor Vergata, the Holy Father answered three questions posed by young people who acted as spokespersons for their generation. They concerned the themes of friendship, the courage to choose, and perseverance in following Christ in the face of the cross.

THERE IS NO FRIENDSHIP THAT IS AUTHENTIC IF THAT IS NOT IN CHRIST.

SAINT AUGUSTIN

In his answers, the Pope continually returned to the figure of Jesus Christ as the central axis of youth in pursuit of dreams and in overcoming doubts. To the first question, he quoted Saint Augustine: *There is no friendship that is authentic if that is not in Christ.* He then added: *Friendship with Christ, which forms the basis of faith, is not just one aid among many others for building the future; it is our guiding star.* In fact, every true friendship is founded and built upon Christ; in this way, social bonds can be strengthened and bear fruit. He concluded by saying: *Know how to see Jesus in*

others. Friendship can truly change the world. Friendship is a path to peace.

As for the courage to choose, the Pope reminded them of the importance of freedom, a freedom that rests on a solid foundation, that precedes and surpasses what we are permitted to see: *The courage to choose comes from love, which God shows us in Christ.* He thus invited the young to consecrate their lives to the Father by always repeating to Him: *You are my life, Lord!*

Finally, the Holy Father answered the last question by exhorting the young to firmly believe in God Providence, who manifests himself along the path of life and becomes the companion of each person, as with the disciples on the road to Emmaus: *As we seek what is good, let us ask him at every step: stay with us, Lord.*

STRIVE FOR HOLINESS

On August 3, at the closing Mass of the Jubilee, Leo XIV encouraged young people to live up to the ambitions that God inspires in them, to embark on a true adventure rather than locking themselves into a mediocre life: *Aspire to great things, to holiness, wherever you are. Do not settle for less. You will then see the light of the Gospel growing every day, in you and around you.* A lively youth is full of hope, aspiring to that holi-

ness which gives life and sets us walking along the paths of grace. Love warms the muscles and hearts of those who have been wounded and who no longer trust in anything. Thus, the Sovereign Pontiff opened a road toward the future, reminding all that man is made for God — not for a life where everything is acquired and immovable, but for an existence constantly renewed in gift and in love.

Pope Leo XIV believes and hopes in this youth that God raises up for the Church, so that she may continue her mission of redemption and proclaim Christ in season and out of season in a world that is undergoing great change — a world that needs Him so deeply! 🙏



Pope Leo XIV during the youth gathering. Photo: Marie Laliberté

Give God children who will sing of His Goodness for ever and ever.



Délia's dream.
Photo: Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.

News from the M.I.C. Around the World

It is with joy and gratitude that we share a few echoes of missionary life, which day by day weaves bonds of love and solidarity, reminding everyone that God is Love for all. As Délia Tétreault said: Being kind makes life pleasant.

Excerpts from the June–July 2025 Chronicles

HAITI — *Providence in the Midst of Trial*

On August 14, 2021, the house in Les Cayes was destroyed during the earthquake, taking almost everything it contained. Yet, thanks to the vigilance and diligence of the leaders of the M.I.C. Province of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a new home was acquired in the commune of Torbeck: a welcoming house on a beautiful property, which also includes a second, more modest but very useful dwelling. We give thanks for this providential care and, with one heart, continue our mission among the Haitian people, confident in Divine Providence.

KANYANGA, AFRICA — *Eggs Bringing Hope*

Our community recently launched a chicken project to meet the nutritional needs of the local population, particularly pregnant women visiting our health centre. One morning, three expectant mothers came to buy a few eggs according to their modest means. Touched by their situation, a Sister gave each of them four more. Their surprise and gratitude were expressed through hugs and radiant smiles.

Every year, Kanyanga celebrates the Young People's Day of the Holy Childhood. Once again, children from various regions came for a spiritual retreat. At the end of the gathering, a group wanted to offer a tray of eggs. Arriving at the convent, intrigued by the chapel door that had been left open, they entered quietly and were struck by the peace of the place. Sr. Jacintha Henry, who was present at the time, took the time to explain the symbols of the chapel before giving them their purchase. When she asked, *"Who would like to become a priest or a religious sister?"*, all hands went up with smiles. Let us pray fervently that many vocations arise to serve the Church and our communities.

NAPO, PERU — A Walk with the Youth

Sr. Luisa Ruiz, youth pastoral counselor, participated in a day organized by the vicar responsible for youth in the Archdiocese of Lima. Under the theme *Rise and Walk*, hundreds of young people gathered at the coliseum of San Francisco de Borja School to experience a joyful and committed Church. Sr. Luisa enthusiastically accompanies these young pilgrims of hope, eager to know Christ better and to give thanks through their lives.

PHILIPPINES — The Festival at ICA College

At the Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA), the long-awaited school fair brought the community together in a festive atmosphere: game booths, rides, food, and a variety of merchandise animated the campus. The event was opened by the city mayor, Mr. Francis Zamora, who expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and promised his support to the institution. The funds raised will be used to support disadvantaged students in Greenhills.

TOKYO, JAPAN — A Church in Dialogue

The 2025 national conference of the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace took place under the inspiring theme: *Hope does not disappoint*, in the

context of the 2025 Holy Year proposed by Pope Francis. The meeting, which was open to the public, brought together various speakers, including Bishop Matsuura (Nagoya) and Sr. Hirota, MMB, who shared their reflections.


The next day, more than 50 participants gathered in Shiomi (Tokyo), including our Sister Ghislaine Parent. Together, they reflected on this essential question: *What is asked of us to live the Gospel today and for the Church to remain a witness to the Good News?* All left enriched and determined to spread this message within their respective communities.

TAIPEI, TAIWAN — Meeting with the Coptic Orthodox Church

Sr. Maria Bao Yanjie had the opportunity to visit the Coptic Orthodox Church in Taipei, accompanied by her teacher and classmates. They were warmly welcomed by the Egyptian priest of the community and two parishioners.

During the meeting, the priest presented the dogma, tradition, and current situation of this Church in Taipei. Founded by Saint Mark, evangelist and Gospel author, the Coptic Orthodox Church is the oldest Christian tradition in Africa. Even today, it remains strongly rooted in Egypt, where about 15% of the population is faithful to it, while also being present across multiple continents: Africa, the Middle East, and North America.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is distinguished by its faithfulness to ancient traditions and its testimony of faith, sometimes even to the point of martyrdom. In 2016, twenty-one Coptic Christians were executed by the Islamic State because of their faith — martyrs canonized by the Coptic Orthodox Church and also recognized by the Catholic Church.

This community, deeply rooted in prayer, remains open to dialogue and fraternity with other Christian Churches, offering a living example of communion in diversity. 



An M.I.C. novice in Cap-Haïtien. Photo: M.I.C.

Paths to the Future for the M.I.C. in Haiti — *Light for Tomorrow*

**By Carmèneta Beauplan, M.I.C.,
and Marie Nadia Noël, M.I.C.**

Dear friends, companions, and fellow travelers,

When one hears the name Haiti, many roll their eyes, thinking of violence, poverty, gangs terrorizing the population, potholed roads, and uncertain tomorrows. All of this is true! Recently, this violence struck our Sisters in Port-au-Prince directly: their home and the school in Delmas 9 were burned and looted by armed groups. The aftermath shows the cruelty of the ordeal, but also the strength of the mission. For despite the pain, the Sisters do not give up.

For them, Haiti does not only rhyme with distress and uncertainty. It also rhymes with hope, creativity, and perseverance. Where everything seems fragile, God delights in letting small seeds of life emerge, capable of rebirth even amid ruins. Our M.I.C. companions in Haiti carry this deep conviction at the heart of their vocation: faith and solidarity can always rebuild everything, and the resilience of the people remains stronger than the fear sown by bandits.



Students at the Immaculate-Conception School in Trou-Du-Nord.
Photo: M.I.C.

EDUCATION — *Planting Dreams in Hearts and Minds*

In our schools and training groups, we see children every day who carry the future of Haiti within them. Give them a notebook and a little attention, and their eyes already shine like lanterns! Educating young people is believing that a classroom — a space filled with laughter and curiosity — can transform an entire country.

HEALTH — *Healing Visible and Invisible Wounds*

Neighbourhood clinics and mobile dispensaries are much more than places for check-ups and distributing vaccines and bandages. They are spaces where bodies are cared for, but also where hearts are comforted. Sometimes, a smile at the right moment is far more valuable than a complicated prescription.

SPIRITUAL LIFE — *Offering Oases of Peace*

Amid noise, worries, and storms, our communities strive to remain islands of prayer and sharing. Places where one can catch their breath, sing a Magnificat or an Alleluia despite everything, and rediscover that evangelical joy doesn't need electricity to shine!

ECOLOGY — *Leading the Green Mission*

Sisters with a hat, a shovel, or a broom in hand? Yes, it's possible! Planting trees, preserving water, learning to cultivate the land differently — it's also a way to proclaim the Good News. Creation is a gift, not a dumping ground: it is up to us to keep it clean and alive.

TOGETHER IS BETTER!

So far, violence has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes, resulting in a significant increase in internally displaced persons. Their number now stands at 1.3 million, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) — the highest level ever recorded in Haiti.

THE FUTURE IS WOVEN WITH MANY HANDS AND MANY "BUTS"...

As missionaries, we cannot lose hope, even if the experience we are collectively living severely tests our physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. The spirit of thanksgiving invites us to seek God's seeds in our living environments. This reality makes us bolder and more creative and pushes us to walk together in hope.

The future is woven with many hands and many "buts"... It is impossible to move forward alone: we walk with laypeople, families, the local Church, and all those who long for a better Haiti. The mission is a large collective project, sometimes noisy, often chaotic, but always full of promise.

The paths to the future for the M.I.C. in Haiti are not pre-paved roads. They are more like small trails, sometimes steep, where one advances step by step, with faith and humour. But one thing is certain: with God's grace and the solidarity of our communities, every step becomes a light for tomorrow. ☺

With You, O Lord



CLAIRE CARRIER, M.I.C.
Sister Marie-Agathe
1933-2025
Saint-Martin de Beauce, Quebec

From the age of five, the Mission took root in Claire's heart. *Our teacher had us dedicate one day a week to the intentions of the missionaries*, she would later say. The Holy Childhood Association played an important role in this. It was the beginning of a dream, which she realized on August 8, 1954, when she entered the novitiate. While devoting herself to community tasks, she continued to dream... and her wishes were granted: in 1966, she left for Cuba. She spent 40 years of her life there. There, despite the scarcity of essential foods, the meals were tasty and nutritious, as Claire was an excellent cook. Catechesis for children and visits to the sick were also close to her heart. In 2006, her mission continued in Quebec in various services, until June 10, 2025, the day she entered the heavenly banquet.



JEANNINE BÉLAÏR, M.I.C.
Sister Saint-Gilbert
1930-2025
Saint-Barthélemy, Quebec

On July 12, 1930, Louis-Philippe Bélaïr's family experienced the joy of welcoming their first child: Jeannine. Having an aunt who was a nun, the little girl was quickly drawn to that way of life. On February 1, 1951, after studying at the Apostolic School in Rimouski, she entered the novitiate in Pont-Viau. In October 1961, she left for Taiwan. Having mastered the language of the country, she taught in a youth centre. At the end of her studies at the School of Faith in Switzerland, she took over the direction of the scholasticate and postulancy in Taipei. In 1977, her apostolic dynamism continued in Quebec in various ministries, including missionary lay ministry. In her nineties, Jeannine took up the challenge of illness, which led her to the heavenly city on July 16, 2025.



MIYOKO KOFUJI, M.I.C.
Sister Marie-Assunta
1934-2025
Tokyo, Japan

Having been a Buddhist, Miyoko said: *It was during my third year of high school that the name of God entered my heart for the first time.* Catechism classes prepared her for baptism and first communion. As a nurse, she met Sister Rita Martel at the hospital and worked at our orphanage in Koriyama. On September 8, 1957, she was welcomed in Tokyo. From 1963 to 1965, she stayed at the mother house and made her final commitment on August 5, 1964. From 1981 to 1984, she returned to work in the infirmary. Prayerful, calm, and gentle, Miyoko encouraged communication. On September 25, 2020, she joined her companions at the Domus Gratie residence in Amagasaki. It is there that, on March 31, 2025, she entered the Father's house.



PAULINE WILLIAMS, M.I.C.
Sister Marguerite-de-Bavière
1938-2025
Saint-Amable, Quebec

Pauline began her studies at age six with the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Saint-Hyacinthe. *They inspired in me a desire for religious life.* Unfortunately, her need to help at home put an end to her desire for specialized training. Various social commitments in her community revealed her leadership qualities. She entered the novitiate on February 1, 1961. Her studies in theology and parish ministry were an asset for her integration in Zambia. With courage, respect, and humility, she became provincial superior of the Marie-Reine-du-Monde Province in Quebec. The missionary laity benefited from her presence on an ad hoc committee. After several years in our Health Services, on May 29, 2025, Pauline entered into the fullness of eternal life.



Pilgrims of Hope, theme for the Institute council of 2025. Sr. Jeanne Gauvin, former missionary in Hong Kong, and Sr. Pauline Yuen, principal of Good Hope College.

Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

The Institute Council was held under the theme of the jubilee year: *Witnesses of Hope* from August 2 to 19, 2025.

Nineteen M.I.C. sisters from 13 countries participated, as well as several guests who came to share the experience of their accomplishments.

The painting was created by the M.I.C. and associates in Hong Kong.

