

MIC MISSION NEWS

VOL. 53, N° 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2026



To sow seeds of joy and hope! — Since 1923

*100 Years
of an Undaunted Mission*



APRIL

For priests in crisis. Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the assistance they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

MAY

That everyone might have food.

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

JUNE

For the values of sports.

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.

**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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MIC Mission News

Mission magazine published
by the Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception

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La culture en visite,
at Villa Opale. Photo:
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Royalty-free photos

Page 4: AdobeStock;
Pages 10-11: Shutterstock,
AdobeStock; Page 17:
Mark Vihtelic, Unsplash;
Pages 19-20-21: AdobeStock;
Page 24: Shutterstock

**Member of the Catholic and
Ecumenical Media Association**

Tax Receipt

Registration Number:
NE 89346 9585 RR0001
M.I.C. Missionary Press

Legal Deposits

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

Canada

We acknowledge the financial
support of the Government of Canada.

The Arrival of Spring



Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Spring represents a period of rebirth, renewed energy, and wonder. It is the time when nature regains its vitality, bringing a new impetus to our lives. After the harsh winter, marked by the pleasures of winter sports, it is time to sweep away the accumulated weariness. Let us look with confidence and enthusiasm at the sun returning to warm our hearts, heralding a season full of promise and light.

Let us leave behind the bad news that often disturb our peace of mind and, like little Lolito, open our arms to welcome the best of life with an optimistic outlook. Of course, painful events affect us, but our hope is nourished by faith and urges us to look to the future with confidence. As missionaries, this hope is rooted in the heart of Jesus.

THE JOY OF LIFE REBORN

In the Gospels, spring is a symbol of spiritual renewal and hope. It is the time to sing the hallelujahs of Easter, the feast that celebrates the resounding victory of life over death. Yes, Christ is risen, let us shout our joy! The Epistle to the Galatians (3:28) reminds us: *There is neither Jew nor Greek [...], for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* From this restoration flows the dignity of each and every person. What a magnificent message of love and respect for today!

This message came to life in the heart of our foundress, Délia Tétréault. Yes, it was this woman whom the Lord chose from all eternity to be a witness of his love, a love to be proclaimed to the four corners of the universe. Her spiritual experience was the inner fire that ignited

her entire existence and which she passed on to all her daughters throughout the world.

God gave us everything, even his own Son. What better way to repay him than to offer him children, chosen ones, who will also sing of his goodness for ever and ever.



A CALL FOR OUR TIMES

Regardless of my role or age, the Lord calls me to spread his love, to defend the poor, the immigrants, and the sick. More than ever, humanity needs compassion and kindness. It needs to let go of self-centeredness and turn to those who are waiting for a gesture of compassion, recognition and affection.

All the articles in this issue reflect the vitality that spring brings: a call to step outside ourselves and look at our world with love.

Happy Reading!

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Living Sources

Sylvie Bessette

After discussing communion as a vehicle for progress in the last issue, let us continue our reflection based on this year's theme and look to the future by exploring ways to make it dynamic.

Church circles evolve according to the events that shape them, whether they are religious communities or parishes, associations of the faithful or secular institutions. There are many possible ways to commit to the Church, many options available to those who are searching. We can marvel at this and see it as a constantly renewed dynamism.

The Church has been on its journey for more than two thousand years. It has weathered crises and catastrophes, evolved, adapted, lost some of its grandeur, and reinvented itself. Consider the Catholic Reformation, which produced so many inspiring saints. Or the Second Vatican Council, which continues to make waves and stimulate reflection on the role of the laity

in the Church, for example. This creativity has kept the Good News of the Gospels alive and made it known in many new ways: social media, videos, blogs, songs, paintings, plays... Many artists and singers no longer hide their faith and speak openly about it in the media.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

The Quebec government has begun an in-depth reflection on the place of religion in the public sphere and has chosen a restrictive approach. Perhaps Quebec is still reacting against the authoritarian Church that existed until the 1960s. However, this has not prevented the emergence of new religious, apostolic, and contemplative vocations among 25- to 40-year-olds who have not experienced religious repression. The prevailing social discourse, which is anticlerical and somewhat stuck in the past, will inevitably evolve with emerging generations.



As we can see, there are many reasons to hope and to see life springing up in ecclesial communities. The forces at work—openness, hope, dynamism, welcome and inventiveness—are at the service of Christians who want to live and embody their faith with others.

The parable of the sower comes spontaneously to mind when speaking of the present era:

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the side of the lake. However, such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables. He said: "A sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil. They sprouted quickly, since the soil had very little depth, but when the sun rose they were scorched, and since they lacked roots, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. But some seeds fell on rich soil and produced a crop—some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear!" (Mt 13:1-9)

Jesus, a skilled teacher, lets those who listen to him interpret his teaching for themselves. Many seeds fell on inhospitable ground and remained barren. Others found good soil and bore fruit. But not equally, it must be emphasized.

THE MEANING

What do these words mean? We must first refer to the first lines of the parable. We then realize that the birds, the sun, and the thorns represent obstacles to be overcome or rather circumvented. We need the patience of the sower to find good soil and his humility to let it bear fruit.

The same is true of all the various ideas and proposals that can be suggested to church communities: some will not bear fruit, others will. This should not prevent creativity, wonder, and the forces of renewal from inspiring our vitality. Christ, the living source of hope, guides and inspires us. 🌿

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Born on November 23, Lolito is, in our hearts, Eloy's great-grandson and the cousin of all humanity.



He Reaches Out to Us!

Eloy Roy¹, P.M.É.

They call me Lolito, but my real name is Lorenzo. I yawn, I sleep, and I express myself in my own way. With my eyes still closed and my little fists clenched, I am delighted to announce that I have arrived! The 124 million newborns of 2025 and I love you very much and hope that Santa Claus has visited your homes with arms full of heartwarming gifts.

In return, we would like you to give us some wonderful gifts: please give us clean water, clean air, uncontaminated fields, and forests that do not burn. Make our Earth a welcoming home for all life and ensure that it is no longer ruled by buffoons, thirsty for oil, rare earths, blood, and anything that smells like money. Already, we are reserving our vote for leaders who are passionate about the environment and justice, who love freedom and peace.

¹ Eloy Roy was a missionary in Honduras, Argentina, and Northeast China (formerly Manchuria).

And that's not all. In addition to these gifts, we would like to ask for another one that we already ardently desire: we would like to have a religion as free as the wind! A religion that would not resemble an army, an academy, a daycare center, or a feudal court. A religion that would be nothing more than a very broad path in which we would listen to the Great Mystery that inhabits the universe, which we would contemplate, sing about, and learn to translate, not into equations, but into art and prophetic action. A path that, in the hustle and bustle of egos, screens, algorithms, robots, microchips, fake news, nuclear waste, and *popcorn*, would put us in touch with witnesses to the "Invisible" from all ages and cultures. A path that, above all, would connect us very deeply to what is most alive, most unique, most creative, most human, most universal, and most "divine" within us.

That, in broad strokes, is what my imagination and my soul would like to hear you say to us, my dear little Lolito, as if you were already a grown man. I lift you high in my arms, like young Simba, and hold you close to my heart, thanking you for landing in our flowerbeds at this moment in our history. You and your generation will help our world through great upheavals and make a fresh start.

DREAM OF A MORE HUMAN WORLD

Dear little one, I want you to know that on this turbulent planet, you will find people of all colours, languages, beliefs, and non-beliefs who desire a world as beautiful as the one you aspire to. Many of us dream of a more humane version of the common home we inhabit. We may be accused of dreaming in colour, but we, who live in a country where winters are often very cold, know with certainty that beneath our vast expanses of snow lies a spring that never dies. When the time comes, myriads of birds will burst forth from the sun and awaken it. It will then rise like a giant. The

ice will melt back into rivers, and from the earth that seemed asleep, flowers as numerous as the stars will bloom. Yes, it will come, dear Lolito, this truly human world we dream of. It will come, just like spring!

UNDER THE RAYS OF LOVE

You were born around Christmas, that holiday of bells, garlands, Christmas trees, and multicoloured lights. Why is it celebrated around the world? Because it commemorates a people who were in tatters and who, instead of sinking into despair, abandoned everything they owned, everything they believed in, everything they loved and everything they adored in order to start afresh.

The saga begins with a poor child born in a stable. No sooner is he on earth than his parents flee with him to a foreign country to save him from a king driven mad by power. The years pass, the little boy grows up and becomes a man like us, but different. His name is Jesus. Through our dreams, our poverty, our illnesses, our hatred, and our delusions, he clears a path for our future by loving us to death on the cross. Under the rays of such great love, cold hearts, blind eyes, and hesitant feet come back to life. Discovering that "love that keeps nothing for itself" is stronger than death, flickering consciences are rekindled...

With artificial intelligence (AI), we might be tempted to believe that we have discovered just about everything. But this marvel, which knows everything, says everything, and does everything, will never be able to love with a heart of flesh. Loving with our hearts of flesh, loving with a "love that keeps nothing for itself" will be the only thing to do in the future if we want to continue to exist as human beings. Will we succeed? Certainly! Because, sooner or later, within us, as in humanity as a whole, the most wonderful of all springs has already begun to awaken. 🌱



In life, certain moments leave a deep impression on us and become memories that we love to revisit and share. When we recount them, we sometimes add a touch of colour or emotion, and these stories, whether they make us smile or shed a tear, give us a real sense of well-being. That's exactly what we experienced recently at Villa Opale. A friendly visit from Grégory Charles, who generously delighted us with his resonant voice and musical artistry, and today it is the artists from the city of Laval's turn to visit us.

UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS AT VILLA OPALE

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

A DEEPLY HUMAN THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE

Before leaving our mother house in Pont-Viau, where the M.I.C. have lived for over a hundred years, we had the pleasure of welcoming Ms. Christine Breton from the *La culture en visite* program (subsidized by the City of Laval), who came to meet us and invite us to participate in one of their projects. Several missionaries agreed to share their stories with artists, recounting anecdotes and memorable events from their adventures around the world.

These creators drew inspiration from the Sisters' accounts of their experiences in different countries, often very far removed from the reality of Quebec. They collected memories of their departure, stories about the challenges of cultural adaptation, but also confidences about the joys and human bonds forged with local populations. These exchanges revealed their deep commitment, their humanity, their strengths, and the emotional richness of their journeys.

A LITERARY AND THEATRICAL CREATION

Based on these interviews, the *Bienvenue aux dames!* troupe created a work of great sensitivity, *Petits miracles nécessaires*, transforming these personal stories into a living and moving collective memory. Each word spoken, each testimony, became a means of touching the audience and sharing a universal human experience. The highlighting of these small everyday achievements, recounted with accuracy, poetry, and realism, deeply moved each of us. We all recognized ourselves in these stories full of meaning and memory.

A BOX OF SOUVENIRS

In the center of the stage was a large box containing symbolic objects. A magazine, a maple leaf, a small bag, and a bird's nest were placed inside, evoking the different continents and mission locations. These simple objects, sometimes funny, sometimes emotional, brought memories to life and paid tribute to our missionary journeys. The stories also came to life in an evocative and harmonious soundscape. The accordion, the violin, and even the musical hand saw—an instrument unknown to many of us—accompanied the narration. These varied sounds added a unique colour to the performance and intensified the emotions we felt.

What struck us most about this adventure was the sincere respect and admiration with which the artists approached us. In Quebec, where people often have a reserved, even critical attitude toward religion, it was moving to see such complete recognition of the dedication and life spent in the service of others. The creators were able to highlight the beauty, humanity, and spiritual depth behind every action of the M.I.C. mission, revealing the people behind the institution.



Laval's visiting culture during a theatrical performance at Villa Opale. (Cecilia Mzumara, Superior General, Sylvia Dupuis, Provincial Superior, and Monette Ouellette, Health Services). Photo: Cecilia Hong, M.I.C.

A UNIVERSAL VOCATION

The M.I.C. have distinguished themselves through their commitment to education, health, and support for vulnerable populations. Their missionary work has taken them to several countries in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, often in precarious conditions. Each trip has been a learning experience, a challenge, but also an opportunity to forge bonds and share humanistic values. The theatrical text has captured this complexity, allowing the audience to feel the richness of these encounters, as well as the perseverance and generosity of the missionaries.

A MOMENT OF JOY TO SHARE

Thanks to the City of Laval's commitment to its aging population, this play will be presented in private seniors' residences in the region. Our sincere thanks go to the team at *Bienvenue aux dames!* who touched our hearts and made us laugh by telling these true stories with humour, respect, and humanity.

This show gave us a precious moment of happiness by reviving memories that are dear to our hearts. The past remains a source of richness and light that is sweet to savour together. Through this text that celebrates openness to the world, solidarity, and generosity, Laval has honoured our memory and offered us a cultural experience that is sensitive, inspiring, and deeply human. 🌸

At the Heart of the Present

Louise Cazeault

The story I am about to tell you is that of a man whom nature has endowed with a weak heart. We will call him Paul Francoeur. Paul, whose name means “weak,” is an active man who is very focused on his social and financial success. His wallet is well-stocked. He has a prestigious job and his circle of friends is so large that he spends all his free time socializing.

Unfortunately, his heart cannot keep up, and sometimes it even forgets to beat or, without warning, takes a break. Deep down, our man finds this situation unacceptable. He is so committed and full of life. He does not understand the absurdity of nature underlying the condition of his heart. We have two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears, and so on. Why only one heart? This error of evolution must be corrected, especially before it is too late and the heart stops beating for good.

Strengthened by this conviction, our man makes an appointment with a surgeon. He asks him to transplant a second heart, on the right. His heart moves



from left to right depending on the position of his body. So there is room for a second heart. With this second heart as a backup, he will be able to die in peace.

The surgeon holds his breath in astonishment. *This client has a mental problem, I'm not the right specialist*, he thinks to himself. *He needs to get his head checked.* And he turns him away! Paul then consults another surgeon, hoping for better results. The second surgeon hesitates and orders an electrocardiogram, a chest X-ray, an analysis of his current heart, an ultrasound, a CT scan, a blood test, and a urine test, all so he can make a better decision a few months later. The verdict finally comes. The space is too small, he tells his client. It would take a very small heart, like a child's. Reluctantly, he has to refuse.

After extensive research and much wasted time, Paul discovers another surgeon. It must be said that this surgeon is somewhat unconventional. In fact, he provokes some sniggers and uncharitable remarks within the medical community. Consulted by Paul, he repeats the tests: electrocardiogram, chest X-ray, analysis of the current heart, ultrasound, CT scan, blood test, urine analysis... Finally, after many delays, he agrees. The procedure begins. Other so-called complementary tests follow. Here we go again! But this time, it's to ensure that the heart is strong, the right size, and compatible. Everything is positive. So, yes, let's go! Finally, the surgery takes place. The recovery goes smoothly. Even better than we could have hoped for.

POSTOP

Paul is full of beans! The worst is behind him. Like a good little soldier, he practices left-right, right-left movements. As he does the exercises, he feels the fluidity of his two hearts. What joy! Little by little, he is returning to his old life of commuting, working, sleeping, commuting, working, sleeping... He also

rediscovers what made him the powerful man he is: strength and determination. But after a while, without meaning to, without even realizing it, he finds himself smiling at strangers he meets. At first he is surprised, then concerned. Is he losing his winning, conquering attitude?

What's more, he reaches out to an elderly person crossing at a red light. Where does this concern come from? Why waste his energy on others rather than walking resolutely toward his own success? And not to mention the support he offers to a woman struggling to push a stroller. As the days go by, examples like these multiply and baffle him... To top it all off, he offers his help to a colleague who is his main competitor...

Finally, he finds himself with tears in his eyes when he sees homeless people and the lines of people waiting to get food. All these lazy people he feels sorry for, despite himself. He takes out his wallet to help them and discovers that he has a heart of gold. Finally, to his own misfortune, he chooses to go into politics, to defend widows and orphans, he, a businessman, a seasoned financier with no mercy for useless public debates. And he becomes a "SOLIDARITY" man.



INCOMPREHENSIBLE!

He cannot accept this from the man of action and power that he is. Where is his conquering spirit? Where is his total focus on achieving his financial and social goals? Where is his notorious harshness towards his opponents? Where is his desperate flight from empty rhetoric? This situation must be resolved urgently, his life is falling apart! He no longer recognizes himself; he no longer knows who he is... he blames his right heart. His troubles can only come from there.

He returns to see the surgeon who operated on him to file a complaint, demand a refund, and seek compensation for the inconvenience he has suffered. He demands that this troublemaking heart be removed.

The surgeon listens to him and explains that, given the small size of his rib cage, he has implanted a state-of-the-art virtual heart. However, it is on the right side,

as he wanted. He assures him that this heart is more efficient than a flesh-and-blood heart. This heart is directly connected to his deepest desires and secret thoughts. With the help of AI, it is able to develop the many possibilities that Paul had previously ignored. This heart beats in the present and only reveals facets of himself that he has been repressing for many years. He, Paul, is solely responsible for this and should be grateful to be able to benefit from the latest advances in science.

Paul remains very upset by the changes that are happening to him. He has a heavy heart. In desperation, he asks the surgeon, *But what do I get out of it?* After thinking about it, the other man replies, *That little thrill of well-being you felt during your recent experiences... It's called 'HAPPINESS'.* 🍷



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An Attentive Presence

After a long discernment process, our reintegration in Granby began on February 1, 2024. Three M.I.C. Sisters lived there in an intercultural presence: two Canadians and one Japanese formed the initial team.

Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.

Six months later, Sister Kyoko Takahashi had to return to her home country after helping to launch this mission. Sister France Royer-Martel and I continued to hope for the arrival of a third Sister to complete the group. After more than a year of waiting, on October 31, 2025, we joyfully welcomed Sister Pierrette Rasoamampianina, M.I.C., originally from Madagascar. She was happy to join us and share the tasks that we had begun. In faith, according to our community charism, she accepted her appointment as a missionary *ad extra*.

Sister Pierrette, how do you see your mission in Quebec?

The mission I have just undertaken is a delicate one: it is not “doing” but “being” that counts. We must refocus on essential values: listening, respect, trust without judgment. The person must be at the heart of the encounter.



Pierrette Rasoamampianina, M.I.C., on duty at Halte Saint-Joseph in Granby. Photo: Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.

Letting them speak so that life can spring forth within them requires renunciation and humility. This quality of presence is essential to my commitment. I believe that God-Love is at work in our history, despite dark and uncertain times. Despite the challenges ahead, I am proud to be a missionary, because I have joy in my heart.

Pierrette wasted no time. After only a few days, thanks to the efforts of our parish priest, Mr. Danick Savaria, our Sister participated in an information session organized by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec for all missionaries newly arrived in the province. Haitians, Malagasy, and nationals from other countries gathered at the Trinitarian Fathers' house. Two African nuns from another community were also present. Sister Pierrette felt privileged to be part of such an enriching training program. As she often repeats, having big ears and a small mouth—listening and speaking little—seems to be one of the fruits of these rich encounters.

A PLACE OF KINDNESS

Her first commitment took her to Halte Saint-Joseph, a meeting place for vulnerable people who are often lonely, destitute, or ill. Working alongside Sister France on Mondays and myself on Wednesdays, she grew to love this unique place. There, listening is a priority and conversations are filled with joy. Over a good cup of coffee and all kinds of treats served by volunteers, each person is welcomed with respect.

Visitors of all ages and backgrounds find a place of rest and fellowship. Some enjoy doing puzzles, others, supervised by Carole, make crafts, and sometimes we even organize bingo. If someone needs a small repair on an item of clothing, a volunteer takes care of it. It is a welcoming environment that encourages listening and sharing, where we can be bearers of hope. Far from seeking to replace existing community organizations, Halte Saint-Joseph's mission, as outlined in its presentation brochure, is to *demonstrate a living and active spirit of kindness at the heart of society.*

Sister Pierrette, why did you choose to get involved with Halte Saint-Joseph?

I chose to volunteer at Halte Saint-Joseph because reaching out to these people speaks to me more. I always pay close attention to the person: as soon as a door opens, I listen, and trust is gradually established. My wish is that every encounter may lead to joy and hope.

Sister Pierrette is serving her second term with the Visitation group. Founded in the parish, this support movement reaches out to those who want it.

Why did you choose this particular group?

I was drawn to the Virgin Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. Going far to bring joy, reaching out to people. It's up to us to go to them. So I visit vulnerable people in their home. My goal is to listen, to simply be there, always with big ears, a small mouth and a big heart. They feel loved. They say, "We are really lucky and spoiled. You give us your time and so much love. Thank you."

Each of these exchanges is guided by one intention: to call the person by name. Whether in the French-speaking or English-speaking community, Sister Pierrette wants above all to learn the identity of the person in front of her.

How do you see your approach to the people you interact with?

As I mentioned earlier, it is the person that matters. I approach parishioners to greet them with a smile, taking care to ask their names. My goal is to build a bridge to communicate. The next time we meet, I can address them personally. From there, a conversation begins. Being attentive to the reality of the other person becomes a mission of love.

To get to know Paul, you first have to listen to him. Only then can evangelization begin. It is not the church that is empty, it is people's hearts that are empty, a bishop told us during a session at the Trinitarians. We must therefore absolutely renew our way of doing things, reshape our approach to reaching out to people.

Granby's mission has been enriched. As Sister Pierrette says: *I love the synodal spirit: walking together toward the Kingdom.* This vision echoes the thinking of our Foundress, Délia Tétrault: *They too will sing the glory of God.* ∞



PILGRIMAGE OF ARTISTS

Sister Catherine Wan, who participates in numerous artistic projects in the diocese, joined other young artists, including our collaborator Ms. Ivy Chan, on a pilgrimage to several holy and beautiful sites in Europe. There were 13 participants, including their leader, Sister Marie-Anastasia Carré, Brother Gabriel de l'Annonciation, of the Community of the Beatitudes, and their spiritual director, Father Yabiso Mukonda, of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM).

Responding to the call of the Jubilee Year to become pilgrims of hope, this group of young artists wanted to deepen their faith by contemplating the beauty that surrounds them and, at the same time, praise and thank God through artistic expression. Under the guidance of Sister Marie-Anastasia, they made sketches from life throughout their journey. This pilgrimage took place from August 10 to 26, 2025. Here are some of the highlights.

Catherine Wan, M.I.C. and Pauline Yuen, M.I.C.

IN BARCELONA: Following in the Footsteps of the Venerable Gaudí, God's Architect

Barcelona is full of wonders created by Antonio Gaudí (1852-1926), the renowned Spanish architect and designer. His creations are admired around the world and continue to be studied. His masterpiece, the Sagrada Família, still unfinished, is considered both a symbol of faith and an icon of transcendent beauty and is the most visited monument in Spain.

Gaudí was a very devout man. His goal was to make art a hymn of praise to the Lord, convinced that his vocation was to make God known and bring people closer to Him. In April 2025, he was declared venerable by Pope Francis, recognizing him as God's architect. Young artists all felt called to take him as their role model.

IN ROME: Passing Through the Holy Doors

The group was able to pass through the four holy doors of the main papal basilicas: St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St. Paul Outside the Walls. Each time, the pilgrims took the



Crossing the Holy Doors of Basilica of St Mary Major.

Photo: Catherine Wan, M.I.C.

time to pray and go to confession. As Sister Catherine recounted: *Before our loving God, we pray for our new life, for an authentic*

conversion. Once again, we cry out to Our Lord Jesus Christ: Who is man to you? You love us so much! Yes, indeed, knock, and the door will open! Seek, and you will find!

IN PERUGIA: Visit to the Renovated Church

In the fall of 2024, Sister Marie-Anastasia and her team were invited to admire the walls of the Church of St. Blaise and St. Sabinus. Here is Sister Catherine's testimony:

Our eyes were immediately drawn to the soft golden fresco depicting about 70 saints with the risen Jesus at its center. The painting depicts the dialogue between the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly city. In this way, art and beauty come together and proclaim the Good News of God's love for all humanity.

IN ASSISI: Walking in the Footsteps of St. Francis

The group stayed at the Franciscan Sisters' house, located just opposite the Basilica of St. Francis, where his tomb is located.

Sister Catherine recounts: *We went out to paint and draw at dawn, accompanied by the morning breeze and the singing of birds. Immersed in this vast expanse of land freshly embellished by St. Francis, we greeted Brother Sun and Sister Star.*

We also had the opportunity to visit the tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis (now canonized). It was another highlight of our pilgrimage: meeting this young saint of the millennium face to face. His words, The Eucharist is my highway to heaven and we must not be afraid of technology; we must use it to spread the Gospel, are truly wonderful messages for our times.



Visiting the former missionary priest who is now at CICM house Brussels. Photo: Catherine Wan, M.I.C.

IN BRUSSELS: Visit to the General House of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Father Yabiso Mukonda, CICM, welcomed the group to the city. They were also delighted to meet a retired missionary from Hong Kong, Father Ferdinand B. He welcomed them with a broad smile and fluent, resonant Cantonese.

In Brussels and the surrounding area, they also visited the famous Comic Strip Museum and several pilgrimage churches: the cathedral, the church of Our Lady of the Poor in Louveigné, nicknamed "mini Lourdes," and Chevetogne Abbey, a Benedictine Catholic monastery.

Reflecting on the journey as a whole, Sister Catherine said:

We visited many holy places, while enjoying the time spent together. We had time for ourselves, to reflect and to pray. We attended Mass almost every day. We exchanged ideas and inspiration about our works of art. We listened to each other with open and humble hearts. These days were testimonies of God's goodness and love in each of us. May this spirit of gratitude and joy continue to fill our daily lives as we return to our missions.

To mark the Jubilee Year, in February 2025 the Vatican hosted the Jubilee for Artists and the World of Culture. This event showed that the Catholic Church attaches great importance to art and artists. Pope Francis described them as guardians of beauty, called to create works that inspire hope and reveal truth. This pilgrimage offered these creators a direct and tangible experience of faith, which nourishes and deepens their art. ∞



From the Same Root

Every spring, we all marvel at the lilacs in bloom and the soft green of the deciduous trees. Beauty is reborn in all its forms. Nature regains its colours, much to our delight. We are more attentive to this at this time of year, but what about the rest of the year? In *The Hidden Life of Trees*¹ Peter Wohlleben, a forester who lives near Cologne, Germany, invites us to take a fresh look. Reading this international bestseller, translated into some thirty languages and with over seven million copies sold, I wondered if we still knew that trees are God's small and great miracles. And if so, who marveled at them.

Marie-Claude Barrière

THE POWER OF THE INVISIBLE

Among all the delightful anecdotes recounted in this essay, one in particular struck a chord with me. One day, while walking through a beech forest, the author stumbled upon what he believed to be a pile of moss-covered stones. However, upon closer inspection, he realized that it was actually a very old piece of wood. In fact, he was looking at a huge stump that was over four hundred years old. Even more surprising, when he scraped the bark with a pocket knife, he discovered a green layer, irrefutable proof of the presence of chlorophyll.

But how is this possible, since it has not had any leaves for a very long time? Why is this stump not dead? He soon concludes that it has been kept alive by the neighbouring trees, which have provided it with the nutrients it needs through their roots. According to the author, there is therefore a genuine mutual aid system between members of this species, which no one suspected. For, in the forest, we must not forget, trees engage in a fierce battle for sunlight, territory, and the earth's resources.

OUR DEEP RAMIFICATIONS

What is extraordinary about this story is this mysterious underground solidarity. In this sense, this ecosystem resembles our own: our love for our brothers and sisters springs from invisible roots, planted deep within our hearts.

However, in order to reach these deep roots and share them, we must purify our gaze, which, let's admit it, is not always easy. Peter Wohlleben himself had to deconstruct the foundations of his profession. As he candidly admits, *Because it was my job to look at hundreds of trees every day—spruce, beeches, oaks, and pines—to assess their suitability for the lumber mill and their market value, my appreciation of trees was also restricted to this narrow point of view*². But, when you think about it, isn't that the case for all of us?

JUST AS A TREE GROWS
WITH INFINITE PATIENCE,
WE MUST WALK SLOWLY
TOWARD OTHERS WITH LOVE,
KINDNESS, AND CHARITY,
CARRYING A GENUINE DESIRE
TO MEET THEM BEYOND
APPEARANCES.


In our modern societies, we too often instrumentalize our fellow human beings, reducing our interactions to transactional relationships in order to achieve our ends. We sometimes look down on, or even despise “dead wood,” those beings who, according to the mercantile logic of the world, have little or nothing to

offer. How, then, can we open our eyes and look with kindness upon those we would prefer to ignore? It seems that the answer can still be found in the words of that forestry engineer: *I learned to pay attention to more than just the quality of the trees' trunks. I began to notice bizarre root shapes, peculiar growth patterns, and mossy cushions on bark*³. In short, we must learn to love humanity in all its diversity and embrace it with all its fragilities and rough edges.

THE POWER OF SLOWNESS

Just as a tree grows with infinite patience, we must walk slowly toward others with love, kindness, and charity, carrying a genuine desire to meet them beyond appearances. We are called to convert and renew our hearts. We will then discover the true essence of others, their wonders and their unsuspected riches.

While some critics have accused the essayist of succumbing to the temptation of anthropomorphism and several scientists have questioned the rigor of his extrapolations, the fact remains that, beyond this controversy, many have seen in this essay, like the newspaper *Le Monde*: “an amazing lesson in living together”.

This spring, I wish us all the grace to lose ourselves in the forest. So that, in contact with the earth beneath our feet, humus may be transformed into humility. A humility born of the awareness that we are all born of the same Father. 

¹ Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees*, translated from German by Jane Billinghurst, Vancouver, Greystone Books, 2016.

² *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.



God is Not Far Away

It is Our Gaze that Wanders

When life moves too fast, what gets us going again when everything seems to be wearing us down? This is a question that requires reflection. There is probably no single answer: it is often a combination of small things.

Amélie Martineau-Lavallée

Sometimes, a simple gesture—tidying up a corner of the apartment, sending a message to a loved one, moving around for a few minutes—is enough to get us going again. The comforting words and presence of a loved one who listens and lends a hand can also help us breathe again. There are those perfect phrases that touch us at just the right moment.

And then there is a change of scenery, even a brief one: opening the window, going for a walk outside, getting away from screens. Sometimes you have to go a little further, to find yourself, a bit like those who set off for Santiago de Compostela. Get back to basics: remember why you got involved in the first place,

revisit your values, your dreams, and the projects that really matter. These are all ways that can give us a new lease on life.

SMALL GESTURES THAT GET THINGS MOVING AGAIN

I agree with all of these suggestions, and I readily use them depending on the circumstances. But looking back, I recognize that what has been and remains most decisive for me is the perspective I choose to take on life. As a teenager, I complained a lot, I grumbled. I wasn't a critic, but rather... a complainer.



So every week, I began to look for signs of His presence in my life and in the lives of others. It was difficult at first. I saw young people like me who felt God's presence much more easily than I did. However, sooner than I expected, signs began to appear. My eye became sharper. Week after week, I began to discover Him in events, words, gestures, and inner inspirations. It was a revelation. The dictionary defines it as *the act of disclosing, revealing or making something known that was previously secret, unknown, or obscure*. Now I know that this is a "secret" that is widely known in Christian life. But until you seek to see Him at work in your own life, you don't intrinsically

know that God is truly present at your side. And that changes everything!

However, when you swim in a negative universe, life ends up taking on a dark hue. Clearly, cultivating negativity does not restore your spirit, let alone your happiness.

CHOOSING TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE CHANGES YOUR LIFE!

I remember an evening of prayer with a group of young people in Sherbrooke. We were invited to ask God for the graces we needed. That evening, I asked for the grace of wonder. Looking back, I suspect the Holy Spirit was at work, because, honestly, I was the first to be surprised that I made such a request at the age of fifteen...

Thirty years later, I can say that this grace I received has had a profound impact on my life. Wonder is above all a change of perspective. Strangely, after that evening, one of my first "practical exercises" was to seek God's presence in my daily life. Until then, I believed that He was up there, far away. Why would He be interested in my ordinary daily life?

Yet I carried this question within me: if the God of Christians is truly Emmanuel—"God with us," as we affirm at Christmas—then there must be traces of His presence here and now, right? It bothered me.

WHAT WONDER BRINGS

This is how wonder consciously entered my life, after I sincerely asked for it (more than once!). This grace allowed me to see life differently, through God's eyes, but also to welcome new things. It was then that, without warning, one of wonder's cousins, hope, approached my heart. Taking a fresh and brighter look at existence gave me a new taste for the future and opened me up to that *little girl hope* that Charles Péguy talks about. I cannot resist the urge to share with you one of the most inspiring passages in Christian literature:

The faith I love best, says God, is hope. [...]

*Faith only sees what is. [...]
Charity only loves what is. [...]*

*Hope sees what will be.
It loves what is not yet and what will be. [...]*

And in fact, it runs them. [...]

And it makes everything move¹.



Can you feel the movement that hope brings to life? It acts as a driving force that opens up paths to the future. It propels us forward and gives us breath. I am convinced that many of us have an incredible need for this duo of wonder and hope. In fact, we should do everything we can to instill it in younger generations. Their capacity for wonder, questioning, and dreaming differently is an immense resource.

With a renewed outlook inspired by wonder and hope for a better world, imagine the creative force that could be awakened! And in the most charismatic individuals, personal spark becomes collective inspiration. I feel that those who dare, invent, and transform the world are necessarily driven by these two forces. No one moves forward in life with a dull gaze and a heart filled with discouragement and despair...

This is how wonder, reinforced by its cousin hope, transforms into action. Missionary work, like the eco-friendly actions of young people here or social solidarity projects that spring up in less affluent neighbourhoods, are examples of this. All these initiatives build collective vitality. With our noses buried in the small problems of everyday life, it seems to me that we forget that the future is built with concrete and joyful actions carried out in unison.

¹ Translation from Charles Péguy, *The Portal of the Mystery of the Second Virtue* (1911), Paris, Gallimard, 1929.

BUILDING TOGETHER: A JOY TO BE SHARED

Come to think of it, I'm still missing two important elements. Wonder and hope bear exquisitely sweet fruit: joy and gratitude. How could it be otherwise? Rediscovering life from a positive perspective, filling our eyes and hearts with the beauty around us, surrounding ourselves with people who are ready to help, pooling our energies to make the world a better place... Once we have brought all this together, joy becomes a part of us, like a backdrop. And thanksgiving—that attitude of the heart that recognizes that what we have and who we are comes from God—is, in my opinion, one of its ultimate fruits!

Make no mistake: this does not prevent the difficulties of everyday life or those inherent in the mobilizing project. However, life is different when you see the bright side, when you know you have support and when you go through it together. Wonder has taught me that life is more beautiful when you open your eyes, your heart, and your hands.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it: seek God's presence in your life. Whether it has been subtle or dramatic, it can transform your outlook... and give you a new lease on life. 🌿

Sowers of Hope



Illustration: Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

The M.I.C. proclaim God's infinite love while responding to the needs of a world thirsting for tenderness and light. Through this overview, we share some events experienced at the heart of our missionary world as a true song of thanksgiving. Délia Tétréault reminds us: *Keep your joy and communicate it to those around you. An invitation to live and sow hope in gratitude.*

Excerpts from the M.I.C. chronicles

LIMA, PERU — *Hope on the Way with Missionary Youth*

At the provincial house, we joyfully welcomed young missionaries for their monthly formation meeting. Sisters Carmen Uipan and Monica Ruiz gave them a warm welcome. The meeting opened with the theme "Missionary disciples, light and salt of the world". The lively and stimulating discussions nourished the faith of the participants and rekindled their desire to be living witnesses of Christ's love. Everyone left filled with gratitude for these precious moments spent together. Thank you, Lord, for these young people who have been touched by our charism of thanksgiving and are eager to share it.

LIMA, PERU — *Hope Expressed Through Talent*

In 2025, María de la Providencia College hosted the grand finale of the "MAPRO Has Talent" competition, a landmark event for the school. Students presented various forms of artistic expression: dances, songs, musical compositions, and imitations.

Our Sisters, who were members of the jury, came back delighted by so much creativity. They enthusiastically praised this wonderful initiative by the school, which highlights the artistry and inventiveness of young people.

SAN JUAN, PHILIPPINES — Hope Celebrated in Unity Among Peoples

On the occasion of National Independence Day, at the Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA), the Sisters from the three Greenhills communities gathered with our Vietnamese Sisters, who are currently in the Philippines to complete their religious formation.

Dressed in their traditional costumes, they presented a program highlighting the history and current situation of their country. They sang their national anthem and presented a slideshow recounting Sister Bao Yen's stay in Canada, allowing us to learn more about the birthplace of our Foundress.

KANYANGA, ZAMBIA — Hope in the Service of Health and Life

A new chapter is beginning for Sister Emelda Katongo. After serving for three years in Lilongwe as provincial secretary, while also offering her assistance at police headquarters, she has now been assigned to the Kanyanga Zonal Health Center. She was officially introduced to the district doctor as administrator, with the mission of making this facility a unique hospital in eastern Zambia.

GUANHSI AND TAIPEI, TAIWAN — Shared Hope at the Heart of Cultures

In Guanhsi, an associate (AsMIC), Lee Ten Mei, invited Sisters Lourdes Lwo and Maria Goretti to dinner in front of the temple to celebrate the Chung Yan Festival. The celebration, enlivened by traditional songs and dances, brought many people together around generously laden tables. A rich and memorable cultural experience.

In Taipei, Sister Maria Bao Yanjie received a scholarship from the Faculty of Theology at Fu Jen University. Congratulations!

PUCALLPA, PERU — Hope Defending Human Dignity


In 2025, Sister Rosario Zari went to the National Intercultural University of the Amazon, where a gathering of public institutions committed to defending human dignity was taking place. We joined this mobilization against human trafficking, a scourge that is affecting more and more young people, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

LES CAYES, HAITI — Faithful Hope in the Service of the Most Vulnerable

The Sacré-Cœur Dispensary of Charpentier celebrated with gratitude 75 years of precious service to the population. A solemn Mass, presided over by Cardinal Chibly Langlois, brought together priests, Sisters, beneficiaries, and friends of the healthcare center in an atmosphere of profound thanksgiving.

The assembly paid heartfelt tribute to the pioneers, Sister Eustelle Samson, nurse, and Sister Eva Marier, laboratory technician, whose dedication marked the history of this place of care and hope. After the celebration, guests joyfully gathered at the dispensary to continue the thanksgiving in fraternity, smiles, and sharing.

LACHINE, QUEBEC — Hope Lived as a Pilgrimage of Thanksgiving

Our Superior General, Sister Cecilia Mzumara, accompanied by her assistant, Sister Michelle Payette, stayed with us for nearly a month during the official visit under the theme: *Women of Thanksgiving, Aging Gracefully as Pilgrims of Hope*. Meetings were held individually and then in groups. Following these consultations, the Provincial Superior and her two councillors were renewed in their mandates, to everyone's joy. Together, in peace and serenity, we continue our mission at Villa Opale, giving thanks as pilgrims of hope. 

Like a Butterfly

Like the butterfly emerging from its cocoon, still feeling in part like a chrysalis while savouring the freedom of its wings, so I feel on this morning filled with spring sunshine. Vulnerable and fragile butterfly, spread your wings in the sun of His Love.

If I were to die now, I would say to you whom I love and who love me: I regret nothing, except not having loved enough.

