

MIC MISSION NEWS

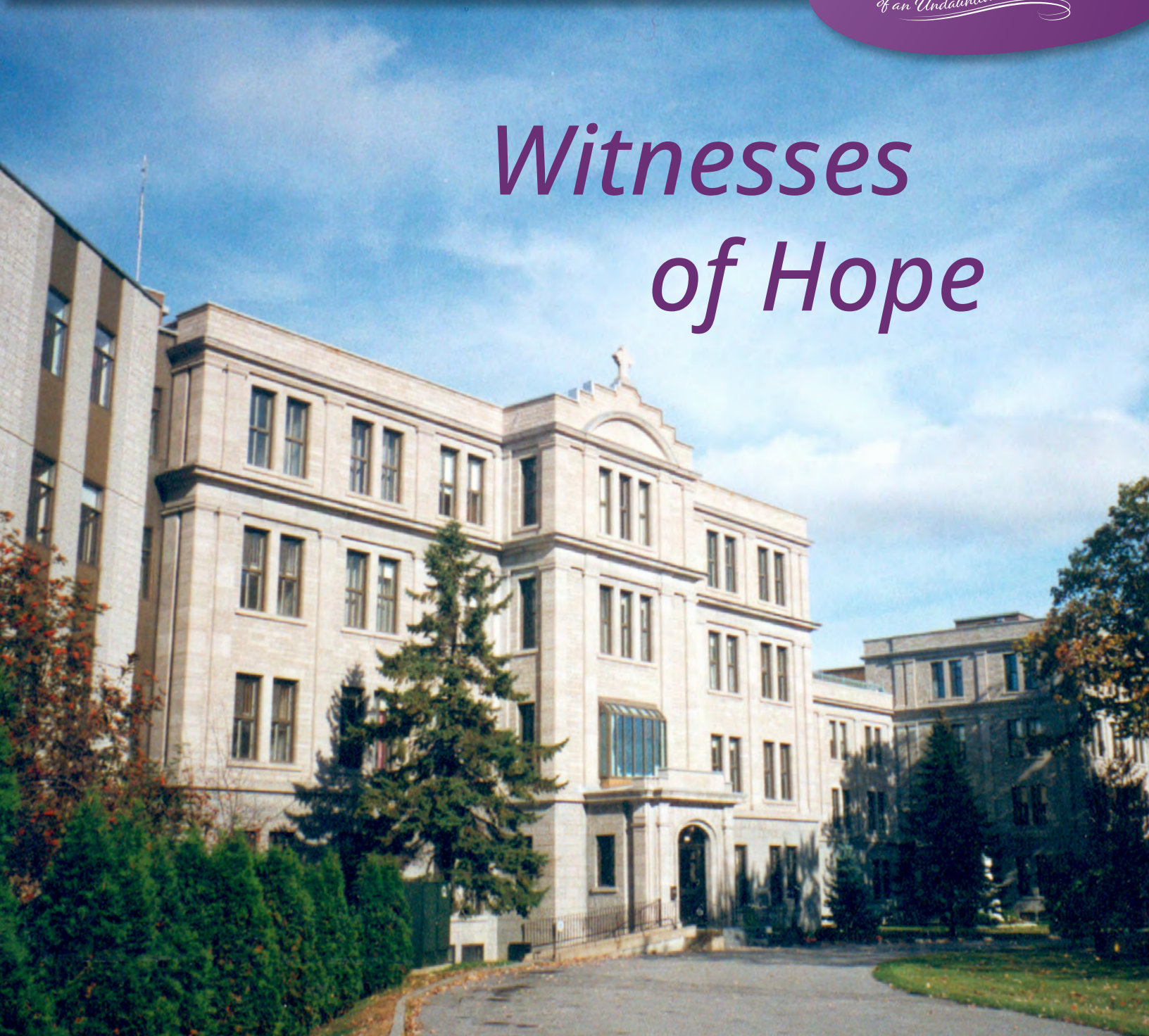
VOL. 52, Nº 2 | APRIL • MAY • JUNE 2025



To sow seeds of joy and hope! — Since 1923

*100 Years
of an Undaunted Mission*

Witnesses of Hope



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

APRIL

For the use of new technologies.

Let us pray that the use of new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

MAY

For working conditions.

Let us pray that through work, each person might find fulfilment, families might be sustained in dignity, and that society might be increasingly humanized.

JUNE

That the world might grow

in compassion. Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his Heart, learn to have compassion for the world.

**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**

WITNESSES OF HOPE

3 | On the Road... – Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

4 | Time to Let Go
– Cecilia Mzumara, M.I.C., Superior General

6 | The Echo of a Bell
– Monique Bigras, M.I.C.

7 | A Bundle of Hope
– Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C.

9 | Same Roots... Same Sap
– Suzanne Gervais, AsMIC of Joliette

**10 | To Be a Missionary, Do You Have to
Believe in the Resurrection?**
– Bertrand Roy, P.M.É.

13 | Hope on the Move – Sylvie Bessette

15 | Hope in Action – Maurice Demers

17 | Lucette — Young at Heart
– Marie-Claude Barrière

19 | Roll On, Roll On... – Nicole Joly, M.I.C.

21 | Letter on Hope – Emmanuel Bélanger

23 | With You, O Lord – Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

MIC Mission News

Mission magazine published
by the Missionary Sisters of the
Immaculate Conception

Offices

Missionary Press M.I.C.
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval (QC) Canada H7G 1A4

Phone: (450) 663-6460

eMail: leprecurseur@pressemic.org

Web Sites:

www.pressemic.org

Publication Director

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Assistant Director

Marie-Nadia Noël, M.I.C.

Editor

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Editorial Team

Emmanuel Bélanger
Sylvie Bessette
Maurice Demers
Éric Desautels
Nicole Rochon
Léonie Therrien, M.I.C.

English Traduction

Renée Charlebois

Proofreading

Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

Circulation

Yolaine Lavoie, M.I.C.

Accounting

Nicole Beaulieu, M.I.C.

Layout and Design

Caron Communications
graphiques

Cover

M.I.C. head office in Pont-Viau.
Photo: Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.

Royalty-free photos

Pages 3, 9 and 24: Shutterstock,
Page 11: Susn Matthiessen/
Unsplash, Pages 19 and 20:
Pixabay

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.

EDITORIAL

On the Road...



By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Since the beginning of 2025, we've been on the road in a Church on the move, bearing witness to the hope that dwells within us.

Courageously, we continue our journey, carrying only our faith in Jesus Christ, who said to us: *I am with you always, until the end of the world.*

MOTHER DÉLIA, WITNESS TO HOPE

Life is made for moving forward with courage and confidence, as our foundress, the venerable Délia Tétreault, used to say. She knew how to draw strength and determination from the Word of God to continue her journey despite the difficulties. This woman was always moving forward, confident in her accomplishment of God's work day by day. Hope gives us joy, serenity and boldness in the events we face.

Following her example, we continue our pilgrimage with faith and courage, despite our fatigue. Life calls us to discover what is beautiful and true all around us. Indeed, with the blossoming of buds, spring offers us its wonders of rebirth, its brilliant colors, the promise of radiant days. Our pilgrimage invites us to pay attention to all that is good and beautiful before our very eyes, to avoid considering only evil and violence. On our journey, let us freely sow seeds of goodness and love to become witnesses of the hope our world so desperately needs.

A CHANGE OF HORIZON

As we peruse the texts in this issue, may we discover the strength and conviction to go even further in our commitment, and to risk a small change in our old habits in order to shine our light on those around us.

For us, the MICs, this small change... will be a big one: life is asking us to leave our head office in Laval and settle in the south-west of Montreal, in Lachine. Radical changes are coming to our lives, as our Superior General, Sister Cecilia Mzumara, tells us. For her part, Sister Évangéline Plamondon invites us to prepare our little bundle of memories. Of course, it's not without a twinge of sadness that we leave this beloved place. However, let's not forget that this is the path taken by many people in our society who must also leave their homes to move into a retirement home. An opportunity to be witnesses of hope, whatever our age or state of health. The impetus of missionary life is there to help us on our way, certain that the Lord and the Virgin Mary are there to accompany us.



As you will see, all the articles in this issue invite us to valiantly continue our pilgrimage as witnesses of hope, the dynamism that dwells within us.

Happy reading!

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

FROM PONT-VIAU TO LACHINE

TIME TO LET GO



**By Cecilia Mzumara, M.I.C.,
Superior General**

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Greetings of peace and joy to each and every one!

On television, an advert for a retirement home caught my eye. It reads: *To grow old is to discover. To grow old is to share. To grow old is to dream. To grow old is to cherish. To grow old is to continue. To grow old is to live.* Yes, to grow old is to truly live, and to keep moving forward with joy and hope, despite the challenges life throws at us along the way.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I am writing to tell you some important news about our Sisters in Canada: they will be leaving their home in Pont-Viau, which will be sold to the City of Laval. Our Sisters are getting older and, for better care on all levels, it is necessary to move them to a seniors' residence. In fact, this is the reality for many congregations in Canada. For us, it is comforting to know that they will remain together in one place with our brothers, the Foreign Mission Priests.

On April 30, 2025, the Sisters will start leaving Pont-Viau for Montreal's Lachine district, in a facility located 23 kilometers away. The Laval home became our mother house after the one at 314, Côte Sainte-Catherine road, Outremont. For many of the Sisters, this first move was arduous and trying. It was like a death in itself. This time, it will be even harder and more painful because, for many elderly Sisters, this house was seen as their last place to live. But the most difficult thing is that the Pont-Viau house is built on the land our foundress acquired for the Institute, her legacy in a way. Many of our Canadian Sisters and others have fond memories of this place, which reminds them of their formation to religious life as postulants and novices. So it is not easy to let go of Pont-Viau.



Chapel of the Mother House. Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

A TIME TO MOVE FORWARD

This news is also painful for all of us in the Institute. It invites each of us *to mourn* a certain attachment to this house, and to practice letting go of what we cherish. This event reminds me that *for everything there is a season, and a time for every activity under heaven* (Eccl, 3, 1). Nothing on this earth is eternal. Reflecting on this, I also realized that it's not easy to leave places and people, but sometimes it's necessary, because, if we have faith, detachment opens the way to greater things in life. New opportunities arise when we let go and allow ourselves to be carried along. We begin to understand that there is a higher force that controls our existence and pushes us forward without fear, worry or anxiety. We learn to let God be God and submit to His will for our destiny.

In this month of the second phase of the synodal process, this move confirms that we are indeed pilgrims on this earth. We are invited to be *pilgrims of hope*; a hope that transforms us and prepares us for our final pilgrimage to eternal life.

Fortunately, the Institute will not be leaving Pont-Viau forever. The good news is that plans are underway to build the Institute's headquarters there. It will include the tomb of our dear foundress, the venerable Délia Tétreault, the generalate, the local community, the international scholasticate, the museum, the M.I.C. Missionary Press, the archives and chapel, and the office for the Délia Tétreault cause.

In closing, allow me to thank the superior and provincial council, as well as our collaborators and partners at the Pont-Viau and Laval missions. They are working tirelessly to ensure that this moving process is carried out with the utmost care for all our autonomous, elderly or sick Sisters. Let us join together in praying for one another, and think of all our elders in the provinces and regions of the Institute. In this time of change, we are reminded that moving forward and letting go is an inevitable aspect of a missionary's body, mind and heart.

Together in the faith, hope and joy of the Gospel. 🌿



Artistic illustration of the Mother House
and Villa Opale. Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.

The Echo of a Bell



By Monique Bigras, M.I.C.

To the tune of *Les Trois Cloches* by *Les Compagnons de la chanson*, Sister Monique recounted the steps taken by the Sisters since 1923.

A dream by the waves is born,
In a heart full of wonder,
Here, freely
A house is given to us.
It is called the MIC Novitiate.
Within its walls will rise.
Magnificat our hearts name you
Youth called by Love.

A bell rings, rings.
Its voice, from echo to echo,
Tells the astonished world:
It is for Délia Tétreault
It is to welcome a dream,
A flower opening to the day;
Hardly, hardly a flame
Still weak, crying out
Protection, tenderness, love.

Days and years go by
Preparing for the mission
Cooking, sewing or gardening
Heart at work or in the bocage
In the presence of Love,
Waiting for the dream day
Africa, Asia or America
With love in my heart I will leave.

And the bell rings, rings!
Its voice, echo after echo.
Joyfully awakens
Our Pont-Viau home.
Missionaries body and soul,
They commit themselves forever
Be a pure flame
Rising up, proclaiming
The greatness of the God of love!

A dream by the waves is born,
Days, nights, time has fled.
Another page opens
And your love awaits me.
Pont-Viau, Montreal and Lachine
Love always precedes us
Délia and Marie are part of the journey,
Magnificat and trusting heart.

It sings in the wind.
Love is calling us
A mission awaits us
"God loves us He is faithful!
Every hour, every day.
We will find under his wing
With eternal life,
The eternity of love!



A Bundle of Hope

A bundle of hope! Why not? How original! Can bundles be used to *carry hope*? Surely! Come to think of it, maybe this is the best way to travel light... or not. A whole community is getting ready to use hundreds of them. Once again, we're hitting the road. As missionaries, we are experts at packing, unpacking and re-packing. And what can we say about boxes and bags of all sizes! This time, we've opted for a bundle of hope. Where are we headed? What is our new mission?

By Évangéline Plamondon, M.I.C.



Sr Nadia is preparing the move of the M.I.C. Missionary Press. Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

A GREAT DISTURBANCE

We are leaving. We are leaving our home for good. It is more than a move, it is a *great upheaval*! We are leaving the premises acquired by our foundress, Délia Tétreault, in the early years of the Institute, where the vast majority of us entered the community and took our vows.

We are leaving Pont-Viau and the *Rivière des Prairies* to live southwest of Montreal, in Lachine, near the river. You have talked so much about China, you M.I.C.s. Yes, but this time it is a lot closer. And there are a lot of people to move.

There are two main reasons for this departure: the age and precarious health of the Sisters in the community, and the administration of a large house that is also many years old. But it is not all over! The mission continues. A future is on the horizon for us and for our motherhouse. The City of Laval is already hard at work.

HIDDEN TREASURES

Among our luggage is the precious bundle of hope. Its fabric is woven from our very lives. Like a book, it contains many chapters: various souvenirs, family photos, community and apostolic commitments around the world, personal diaries, and what else? The hidden treasures of our secret garden, the values of our missionary life: the happiness of belonging



Délia Tétreault. Photo: M.I.C. Archives

to the Lord, of having worked in his vineyard, the sweet complicity with Mary of the Magnificat, the nuances of our *yes* pronounced with fidelity, the affection between us, the communion in the Church, the discovery of other cultures, not forgetting the deep joys, the sorrows, the doubts... Memories nourish our hope.

Pope Francis said: *Hope is a risk*. How right he is! Whatever our age, we are asked to move forward, because *life goes forward*, as an elderly Sister used to tell me. We are asked to move forward, to risk, to let go. Yes, this move uninstalls us, but, at the same time, it makes us feel solidarity with all those walkers who are looking for a home, a country; with those people who, at some point in old age, leave their family home or their environment. We find ourselves among these modern pilgrims. So why not share our hope with them?

And there is more. When we close the bundle, the most important thing is the knot. What will ours be

like? Solid? Tight? Humour is needed to make it more flexible, but above all, it must be made with a very special virtue: surrender! As we accept to let go, the questions multiply in the face of the unknown, uncertainty and adaptation. How will it all be done? Surrender spiced with humour and combined with hope will give life to the pilgrims we are. Our foundress taught us this throughout her life.

IN MOTHER DÉLIA'S BUNDLE

Délia dared. She risked. She surrendered herself. How many examples and writings in this sense does she leave us as her legacy: *Throw the past into the bosom of God's Mercy, the future in the arms of Providence and the present in the accomplishment of his holy Will*¹. Courage and confidence are the two treasures that she has packed into her bundle. Faced with the love of God that gripped her, she wrote in her spiritual testament:

*It seems to me that the main reason for the existence of our society is really thanksgiving in union with our Immaculate Mother*². And she advises: *Be cheerful in spite of it all... They say that joy is one of the best tonics*³. *Let's give smiles, prayers and kindness*⁴. She continues to send us on mission. *Charity and thanksgiving: what virtues you will be practicing! Following Mary's example, you will have to cross mountains and valleys to help your dear neighbor, and from now on your life will be one long Magnificat*⁵. A mission that is possible to live, whatever our age.

Mother Délia has given us the treasures of her bundle. When we draw from them, we find the hope she nourished with her faith and shared with others in charity. Mission has a future! Let us cross over to the other shore! 🌿

¹ Translated excerpt from: Gisèle Villemure, M.I.C., *À l'écoute de Délia*, Montreal, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, coll. *Braises et encens*, 1997, p. 223.

² Translated excerpt from: *Testament spirituel de Délia Tétreault*, September 1916.

³ Translated excerpt from: Gisèle Villemure, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁴ Translated excerpt from: Gisèle Villemure, *ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵ Translated excerpt from: *Un long Magnificat*, M.I.C. Archives, 1994.



The AsMIC group at the Mother House chapel. Photo: Adrienne Guay, M.I.C.

SAME ROOTS... SAME SAP



**By Suzanne Gervais,
AsMIC of Joliette**

Sometimes all it takes is one dream to turn a life upside down. Sometimes all it takes is one *shared dream* to change the world. All it took was a field of wheat with a few children dancing in it for a missionary community to be born, and for lay associates to join in.

On a beautiful autumn day, with our name tags on our lapels and our hearts slung over our shoulders, we revisited with emotion the convent which, for over a century, had housed the novitiate and infirmary, on the banks of the *Rivière des Prairies*, between the earth and infinity.

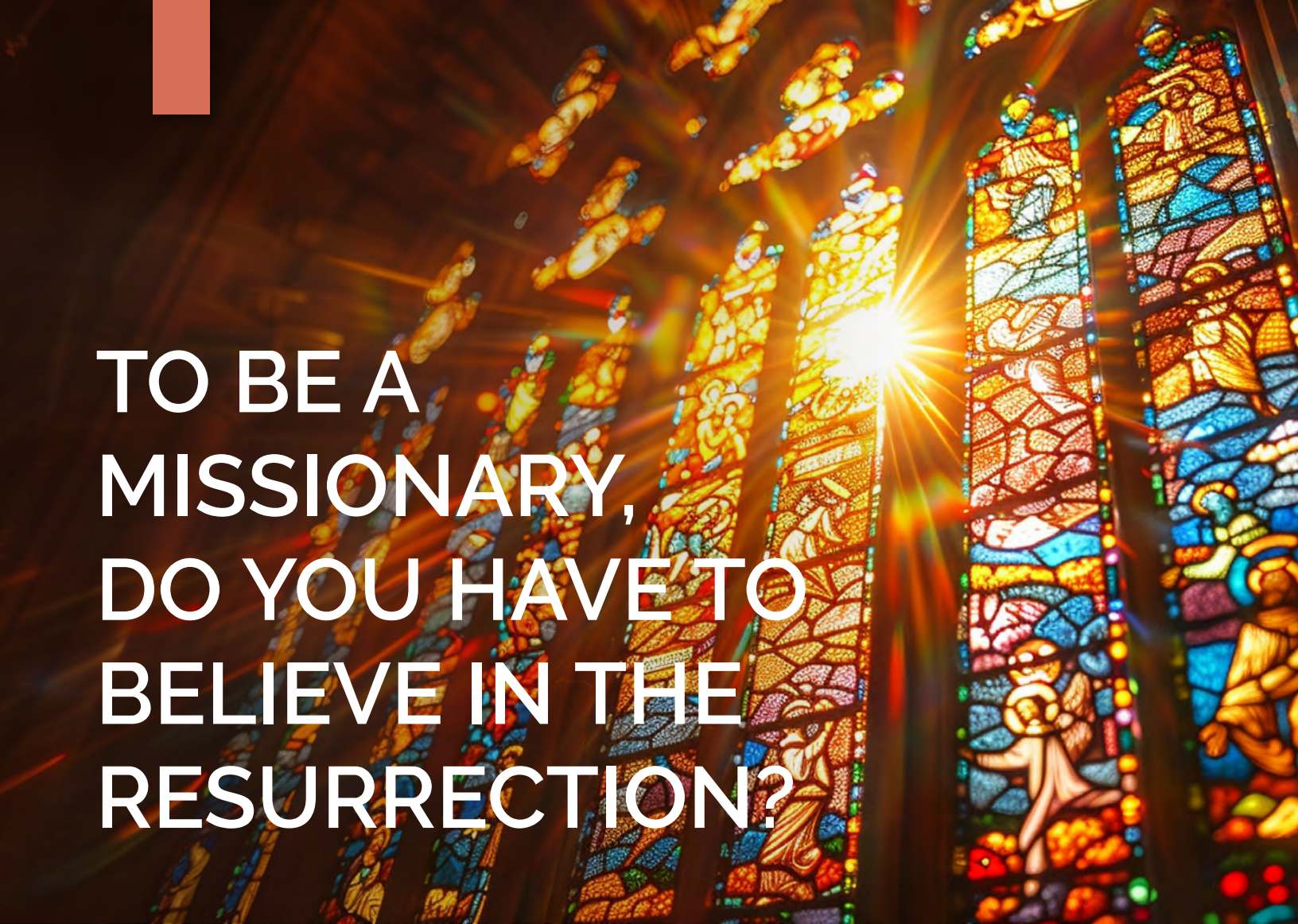
To write a new chapter of a holy story in tenderness and friendship, that is the invitation received from our Sisters on this day of September 21, the day on which the Church marks the patronal feast of Saint Matthew. Does *Come, follow me* mean anything to you about these *Adventurers of God* who left family and country behind to go and meet the Lord who was hungry, thirsty, sick or a prisoner (Mt 25:35-36)?

To meet again, to tell each other once more the beautiful story of the wheat field. The beginnings of a dream that has given so much, and the new springs that open onto a nascent mission. With our Sisters, welcoming God's today in the footsteps of Mary.

Take a gentle tour of the house we've come to so many times, sunshine in our luggage, to remember, share, pray, weep and give thanks.

Revisit the archives and the museum, filled with pieces of life, little stories, bits of memory, journeys, photos, testimonies, and give thanks once again. To revisit a modest room, whose walls treasure the sweet Hail Marys of tears and joy that marked Mother Délia's holy years. Pray at the foot of her tomb, where so many petitions were made and answered.

Retreat to the chapel and, in conversation with God, let the Spirit slip into our hearts, in an atmosphere bathed in song, silence and meditation. Then, in tenderness and friendship, we whisper a *thank you*, a *goodbye* and a *see you soon*. 🌸



TO BE A MISSIONARY, DO YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION?

Stained glass window depicting the Resurrection. Photo: Shutterstock

By Bertrand Roy, P.M.É.

It was the last day of a missionary training session in Honduras. The morning was devoted to the theme of mission as a *passion for Jesus* and also as a *passion for his people*, in the words of Pope Francis (cf. *The Joy of the Gospel*, n° 268). We spoke of Jesus' parables and healings, such as when he brought a widow's only son back to life in Nain (*Luke 7, 11-17*). Reanimation? Healing? Resurrection?

The question caught me a little off guard, but I should have expected it. During the exchange, we had just talked about reincarnation. Faced with death and its mystery, isn't this belief an increasingly common response, as reasonable if not more so than resurrection? *So, to be a missionary, do we need to believe in the resurrection?*

WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION

All participants agreed that resurrection in connection with mission is more than an astonishing cure for a temporary return to life. The young man from Nain whom Jesus brought back to life in order to return him to his mother remained mortal in spite of everything. In relation to mission, resurrection is more than just another opinion about what happens after death. It is a testimony to the living Christ.

The link between resurrection and mission establishes something essential. It's about the very joy of the Gospel, the joy that drives the mission movement. This joy is the Good News of God's love, faithful to his promise to save the just; it is the Gospel of the gift of



Bertrand Roy, P.M.E., gives a training session (interreligious dialogue) to the Scholastics M.I.C. Photo: Suzette Jean, M.I.C.

the Spirit as participation in the abundant life of the Risen One; it is the Gospel of the hope of missionary disciples. We are at the heart of mission.

TO BE A WITNESS,
YOU HAVE TO HAVE SEEN
OR HEARD SOMETHING,
BE ABLE TO GIVE AN
ACCOUNT OF IT, AND MAKE
A PERSONAL COMMITMENT
TO THE SUBJECT.

More than a reversal of fortune leading to the happy conclusion of the Gospels, the resurrection is an unprecedented point of departure. In the movement of the creative Spirit at work in the living Christ, the Gospel race is launched *to the ends of the earth* (Ac 1, 8). Witnesses to Christ's resurrection are at the beginning of this mission in the service of the Gospel, which continues from generation to generation right up to the present day.

To be a witness, you have to have seen or heard something, be able to give an account of it, and make a personal commitment to the subject. What witnesses

to the resurrection see and hear is not a sound and light show like in the movies, but the presence of the living Christ. In faith, they recognize the one in whom is manifested the love of the faithful God whose eyes are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine (Ps 32, 18-19).

Resurrection witnesses recognize the coming of the Kingdom of God in the human gestures of the risen Jesus: he appears in their midst, he eats with them, he shares in his body the wounds of the world's crucified, he proclaims the Beatitudes in his own life. In the light of God's Word according to the Scriptures, a Word that precedes them and calls them to faith in God's future, Jesus' disciples discover that the promise of a life stronger than death is fulfilled in him. This is the heritage of the faith of their ancestors since Abraham, Moses and all the prophets.

Pope Francis' words about Abraham's faith can be used here to describe the faith of the witnesses to the resurrection as an act of remembrance. *As a response to a word which preceded it, Abraham's faith would always be an act of remembrance. Yet this remembrance is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken. We see how faith, as remembrance of the future, memoria futuri, is thus closely bound with hope* (Excerpt from the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, 9).

WITNESSES OF HOPE

The link between resurrection and mission is not, then, the propagation of a belief about what happens after death. This link is first and foremost an Easter faith. It is the vital experience of hope linked to faith as *memory of the future*. The gift of the Spirit received from the Crucified One, victorious over death, transforms the fearful disciples into witnesses of hope.

TO WITNESS HOPE
ON THE ROAD TO MISSION
MEANS TO DISCERN THIS
ACTION OF THE SPIRIT
THAT PRECEDES THE
MISSIONARY DISCIPLE IN
ALL HIS ENCOUNTERS.

And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. [...] And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rm 5, 2b.5).

The gift of the Spirit, which associates believers with the new life of the Risen Lord, enables us to recognize his presence in ourselves and in the world. To witness hope on the road to mission means to discern this action of the Spirit that precedes the missionary disciple in all his encounters, however unpredictable or disturbing they may be.

This witnessing of hope is much more than optimism about the future, resilience to bounce back from adversity, or confidence in scientific and technological resources to improve human capabilities. The recent pandemic, *the red flags* of the ecological crisis, the perils of migratory movements, the unpredictable consequences of digital culture — these are all signs of the fragility and mortality of all those relationships that make us who we are.

The question of the link between resurrection and mission is that of the witness of hope today. What Paul wrote about Abraham's faith in *hope against all hope* (Rom 4:18) is more relevant than ever. This paradoxical formula of hope against all hope, which can be interpreted as hope against all hope that is disappointed or at risk of being disappointed, points to the radical nature of faith, which takes its missionary impetus from the joy of Easter. 🌸

*I support the mission by
subscribing to the magazine!*



\$10 / YEAR
DIGITAL
SUBSCRIPTION

> www.pressemic.org

HOPE ON THE MOVE



By Sylvie Bessette

In the last issue of *The MIC Mission News* magazine, we reflected on what it means to set out on a journey, be it a traditional pilgrimage with a physical goal to reach, or an inner journey of reflection and discovery.

We are currently experiencing some destabilizing and unexpected world events, in Canada and elsewhere. Navigating these economic and diplomatic pitfalls requires a great deal of skill and confidence in human reason. It's not always easy to find one's way. For believers, the resources of faith can be a powerful comfort. In his letter for the opening of the Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis reminds us that *the spiritual dimension of the Jubilee, which calls for conversion, should also embrace these fundamental aspects of our life in society as part of a coherent whole.*

That is why it is so important to rely on hope to combat the despair that can arise in the face of so much alarming news. Pope John Paul I, during his brief pontificate, affirmed that this virtue *is obligatory for every Christian*, and *one is attached to the following three truths: God is almighty, God loves me immensely, God is faithful to promises. And it is he, the God of mercy, who kindles trust in me; so that I do not feel lonely, or useless, or abandoned, but involved in a destiny of salvation, which will lead to Paradise one day.*

Emily Dickinson, a 19th century American poet, considered *Hope is the thing with feathers — that perches in the soul - and sings the tune without the words — and never stops at all.* This is a dimension of hope that we must never forget: God is constant in his love, and he carries us when we cannot stand it any longer, as in that beautiful poem by the Brazilian Ademar de Barros, *Footsteps in the Sand*:

One night, I dreamed a dream, I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord. When the last scene of my life shot before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that in certain places there was only one set of footprints. I realized that this was at the lowest and saddest times of my life. I questioned the Lord about my dilemma. *Lord, You told me when I decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way. But I'm aware that during the most troublesome times of my life there is only one set of footprints. I just don't understand why, when I need You most, You leave me.*



Letting ourselves be carried by the Lord. Photo: Shutterstock

He whispered: *My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.*

The pilgrimage of life of which the Brazilian poet speaks is one of hope towards a better life. Hope must continue to sustain us when difficult days come and knock us down. We sometimes walk into headwinds; no life is perfect. But we keep hoping and walking.

Jérémie McEwen, in his essay *Je ne sais pas croire* (I don't know how to believe), shares with readers a reflection on spirituality on the move, according to which the fact of not being in one's familiar universe leads us to take unprecedented actions. Visiting a church, taking

an interest in places of pilgrimage, trying to get closer to one's metaphysical dimension - these are all acts that we would not necessarily perform at home. The spirit is freed from everyday worries, and you come closer to a spiritual quest, whether you are a believer or an atheist. Herein lies the heart of a pilgrimage: rediscovering a personal dimension that may be flying under the radar in everyday life.

Expectation differs from hope: *Expectation is human. It is based on analysis. It is necessary, but it can be wrong. Hope is based on God's Promise, the certainty of having been chosen by Him, out of love.* This is what we read in *Théo: the Catholic encyclopedia for everyone*. Is this not the most beautiful definition of our Christian hope in the love of Christ? ∞

THE QUEBEC ADAPTED TRAINING CENTRE FSWC

HOPE IN ACTION



By Maurice Demers

Located east of the Saint-François River in the city of Sherbrooke, at the corner of Galt East and Bowen South, the *Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC* is a little gem where real miracles happen! Residents of the Eastern Townships are in luck, as it is the only First Steps Wellness Centre (FSWC) in the province. In an article published on the Radio-Canada Estrie website, Carl Marquis explains: *The idea of setting up such a centre in Sherbrooke came from a former Waterville TG employee, Noriko Imaizumi, who knows the man who created the first FSWC in Canada, in Regina. It's a guy named Chris Lesanko, who was a student at Bishop's, and who had an accident that left him a quadriplegic. He was a gymnastics coach who taught Noriko's son¹. The approach used, based on scientific advances made in the United States, initially aimed to enable people with spinal cord injuries to regain certain motor functions through neuroplasticity.*

The Brain Research Federation website explains that *neuronal plasticity is the brain's ability to recover and restructure itself. [...] Neuroplasticity allows neurons to regenerate, from a functional point of view, but also to form new connections²*. Carl Marquis adds, however,



Photos: Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC



that it will take a great deal of effort and patience for a paraplegic to regain a certain degree of mobility. You have to go back to the old way of doing things, like when you were a baby. We have to start learning our movements again³.

FSWC training centres are not only open to people with spinal cord injuries. The home page of the one in Sherbrooke indicates that the people who can benefit from their programs are individuals *living with, for example, a spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, stroke, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's*



Photos: Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC

disease, *Spina bifida*, *Ataxia of Beauce* and *Spinal muscular atrophy*⁴. This is where I have been training for the past year and a half to treat my multiple sclerosis. Since people suffering from a multitude of health problems can benefit from follow-up care at this location, they come from the Eastern Townships, Montérégie, Outaouais, Lanaudière, Mauricie, Centre-du-Québec, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches and Bas-Saint-Laurent to be treated by competent kinesiologists. These kinesiologists have been trained in Regina in the FSWC's *Activity-based Therapy* program. This program recommends performing exercises to stimulate neuroplasticity, and then relearning the stages of gait development.

Disabled people of all ages are monitored by specialists. There is even a special program for children, aimed at *integrating pathological reflexes and establishing new, correct and functional movement pathways [through] intensive and directed sessions to guide the child's development in the direction it would naturally take*⁵. A video posted on YouTube, hyperlinked to the centre's website, recounts numerous testimonials from parents who are very satisfied with the treatment their disabled child has received there, improving his or her quality of life. Adults have also reported good results. Among them, this user, who recounted her experience as follows:

*In 2017, I suffered a spinal cord injury [...] and have been a paraplegic ever since. I was a client of the Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC in Sherbrooke for five months. During that time, I saw a lot of improvement in my lower body. I have increased my physical strength so that I can transfer myself without help; I have regained my autonomy in my daily life. I have virtually no more muscle spasms in my legs, and I've really regained my balance*⁶.

The people who go there to train do so in the hope of improving their own or their child's health. Their life stories give truth to the proverb *God helps those who help themselves*. 🌿

¹ Geneviève Proulx, "Le petit gym des grands miracles", Radio-Canada Estrie, February 17, 2022 [<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1857978/centre-bllesses-paraplegiques-sherbrooke>]. Mr. Carl Marquis is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Centre québécois d'entraînement adapté FSWC.

² Translation of: Charlotte Piau, "La plasticité cérébrale" [frcneurodon.org/comprendre-le-cerveau/a-la-decouverte-du-cerveau/la-plasticite-cerebrale].

³ Geneviève Proulx, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC (FSWC Quebec) website [fswcquebec.ca].

⁵ Children's program of the Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC [fswcquebec.ca/children.html].

⁶ Videos and testimonials from the Quebec Adapted Training Centre FSWC [fswcquebec.ca/videos-and-testimonials.html].

Lucette

Young at Heart



By Marie-Claude Barrière

Every year, from August 6 to 15, men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life set off on their journey. Among them is Lucette Beaudoin, an exceptional woman of conviction and hope. If, as Pope Francis affirmed in his general audience on May 8, 2024, *hope is for the young at heart*, Lucette is living proof of this. Discreet but determined, she has been leading the Marie-Reine-de-la-Paix pilgrimage from Montreal for the past thirty-four years, a walk to the *Notre-Dame-du-Cap* shrine in Trois-Rivières.

Inspired by the Polish pilgrimage, the theme of this Marian journey is peace through reconciliation, and it takes place during the novena leading up to the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. It was founded in Quebec in 1984 by Suzette Gill. As Lucette puts it, it's nothing less than *a retreat in the heart of nature where you are accompanied by strangers*.

LET'S GO!

At dawn on August 6, the procession sets off from the cathedral basilica of Marie-Reine-du-Monde. Each walker covers an average of three to six kilometers per stage, or around one to one-and-a-half hours, before taking a 30-minute rest at one of the predetermined stops. After catching his breath, the walker heads off again for another stop, between four and seven each day. While the first two days are designed to warm up

the legs, the third, sixth and eighth put determination and stamina to the test, as the walk covers more than twenty kilometers in one day. Over the course of nine days, participants will have to cover some 140 kilometers to reach their destination.

Fortunately, everyone travels light, as food and luggage are transported by truck. Volunteers are on hand to ensure safety (a car follows the group at all times) and to transport those who may need immediate assistance, particularly in the event of illness or injury. A few years ago, up to fifty people were able to cross towns and villages in this way, but since the pandemic, only around twenty meet at the start.

Of course, this adventure requires meticulous preparation. As early as March, Lucette and a few other volunteers are hard at work coordinating the logistics of the event: listing the churches, parish halls and schools that would welcome the faithful during the night, confirming the names of the good Samaritans who would offer food and drink, and anticipating any difficulties that might arise. And, inevitably, difficulties do arise! But after thirty-four years, Lucette is adamant that all the bumps in the road, big or small, have always been smoothed by Mary. Mary — *the key to hope*, in the words of Pope Francis in his homily on New Year's Day 2023 - watches over her children unceasingly.

A WARM WELCOME

Over time, a community of guests has formed. Elderly people, retired people or families wait impatiently for the height of summer to welcome familiar and unfamiliar faces. Neighbors rush to offer their verandas, houses, barns or lawns to welcome their guests. And, best of all, this virtuous circle extends from year to year, transcending generations. Lucette even told me that one grandmother passed the baton to her granddaughter, who was delighted to open her door to these visitors.

NEIGHBORS RUSH TO OFFER THEIR VERANDAS, HOUSES, BARNs OR LAWNS TO WELCOME THEIR GUESTS.

Along the way, taking advantage of the presence of a priest, we read the breviary, recite the rosary or listen to testimonies, but we also allow ourselves periods of silence to interiorize the word of God. If Mary is the bond of love that unites pilgrims to one another, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the great transformers of hearts. Conversions even take place. For, although the original motivations of the participants are manifold - to pray for a job, to regain their health



Pilgrimage to Cap-de-la-Madeleine. Photo: Archives Lucette Beaudoin

or simply to sing a Magnificat in honor of the Virgin Mary - a common, invisible and intimate work takes place. To paraphrase St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (12:27): *You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

This spirit of brotherhood and unity strengthens their trust in God, so much so that, on arrival at the Notre-Dame-du-Cap shrine on August 15, Lucette is still amazed at the joy and peace radiating from the faces around her. The men and women seem literally transformed, as if this pilgrimage had *purified their faith*, making it even stronger and firmer. After a Eucharistic celebration and farewell dinner, everyone goes home with a peaceful heart. Thank you, Lucette, for the light that burns and shines within you. 🌸



Roll On, Roll On...

Where you go, I will go

(Rt, 1, 16)

By Nicole Joly, M.I.C.

In a burst of dynamism, I offered the companions of *MIC Mission News magazine* to write an article on the service we currently provide at the Pont-Viau Mother House, that of driving the Sisters to their medical appointments. Sr Gaétane Perron and I go daily to hospitals in Montreal, Laval and sometimes Saint-Jérôme for dental, eye, ear and other treatments. In these welcoming but not always attractive places, we see many disabilities and sufferings of all kinds. Not to mention wait times that sometimes last up to three hours. All the same, it allows us to make contact with other caregivers: doctors, nurses, volunteers, companions...



QUALITY SERVICE

Openness to the needs of others and good driving skills are essential to provide a quality service. But beware of speeding tickets! Over the years, I've had two, and to make sure I remembered them for a long time, I had to pay for them myself... Come to think of it, that was a good thing!

But how did I end up in this ministry of compassion, as pastoral animator, homilist, receptionist and driver? It is a combination of circumstances, leveraging my ability to adapt and listening to the words of my parents and superiors. I often think of my parents and companions, who have so often adapted to life and its unforeseen events.

Nicole Joly, M.I.C., driver of the sick. Infographic: Thérèse Lortie, M.I.C.

Denise Duhamel, my predecessor, had some health issues, so I took over for her. She had been doing this work for almost thirty years, if not more. For me, this woman was a model of availability and discretion. During COVID-19, she would take samples to the nearest health centre up to four times a day, without saying a word! You see what I'm getting at? No? Well, I might have suggested that the samples be collected to make fewer trips. I confess that, for me, this service is also a path of conversion. I am not here to decide, but to execute. So, roll on, roll on!

MY ASSESSMENT TO DATE

Looking back over my two years in this post, I realize that it is not knowledge, power or science that is at stake here, but rather being close to the beneficiaries. A bit like Saint Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians (13, 1-7): *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels [...], have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge [...], but do not have love, I am nothing. [Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* So I still have a long way to go. I often think I still have a long journey to truly love the Other in others... Roll on, roll on!

In the end, the most important and rewarding part of this adventure is the relationship that develops between my companions, the auxiliary attendants and myself during these medical journeys. Sometimes people tell me that I do my job well. That may be true,

but it is after work that I have to pay attention! I have come to realize that I sometimes vent my frustrations after I have completed my shift. I have many qualities, but I am not patient... however I aspire to be with all my being! In any case, benevolence makes its way. Our Mother Délia used to say to her daughters: *Only gentleness and goodness have the power to change hearts.* I am a believer!

As we are moving to Lachine this year, I am giving myself time to correct these points in order to become a saintly nun of the Immaculate Conception, in fulfillment of the plan that God, in His great Wisdom, has willed for me and for those whom my heart frequents and carries in my loving and prayerful life.

Thank you for reading and for supporting my Sisters around the world. 🌊

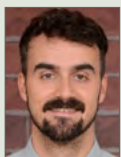


Pharmacie Dorian Margineanu inc

**PROUD PARTNERS OF YOUR
COMMUNITY FOR OVER
20 YEARS!**

Phone: 514-384-6177
Fax: 514-384-2171





By Emmanuel Bélanger

Note to the reader: This letter on Hope was sent to my sister when I was on the island of Cyprus on February 7, 2020,

just over a month before the health crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, I was serving as a seminarian accompanying a priest and families in a Maronite Church mission in Nicosia. It was a year of discernment about my religious vocation. Having been a seminarian in Lebanon for six years, I had to choose between continuing my path towards the priesthood or becoming a layman again. That said, the letter has been revised by its author to lighten the text and make it easier to read.

Letter on Hope

Dear F.,,

Being in my late twenties, I can look back on the last 10 years of my life, since I entered adulthood, and draw some wisdom from my experiences. So, I am writing to you as I would have wanted to be written to at your age, to help you face life's choices and the adventure it has in store for you, and I am sure that, if you let God guide you, it will be one of grace and holiness, for nothing is more important to me.

Charles Péguy, a French poet, spoke of Hope as a little girl who holds her two big sisters, Faith and Charity, by the hand. She leans on them, but it's thanks to her that they keep moving forward.



Visit to monasteries in Cyprus. Photos: Archives Emmanuel Bélanger

Hope, like her two sisters, is a theological virtue, meaning that it is a gift from God, not earned by our efforts, but leading us to God. We can truly hope when we believe (Faith) that God loves us (Charity). The three always work together, but Hope is the virtue closest to our humanity, to our childhood.

I have always been passionate about Hope, but at a certain point in my life, I believed that despair was truer and more powerful. On one occasion, however, I truly experienced the opposite. It was in December 2015, in Lebanon. I was waiting to receive my passport so I could travel, because when I had applied for a residence visa at the *Sureté générale*, it had been taken away from me. During the week leading up to my departure, I went to the visa office every day hoping to get my passport back. It was also exam week.

The morning before my departure, I was still there waiting, completely discouraged and cursing the Lebanese system: still no news. I said to myself: *That's it. God does not want me to go home for Christmas.*

And then I had a revelation.

I saw with clarity how despair is an easy temptation, and that the real battle is *to hope against all hope*, as St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans (4:18). Finally, I had to return to the seminary, as I had an exam in the afternoon. As I was leaving the seminary, I learned that my passport and residence visa were ready. Less than 12 hours before my flight...

This was a great spiritual lesson for me. I learned that God provides for us and I got to know little *Hope*.

This memorial never leaves me. And often, when all seems dark and lost, I remember little *Hope* and ask her to come and play with me to chase away my worries, to teach me to trust in God and not to doubt his love.

LITTLE HOPE

Just last autumn, *Hope* was a support to me when I was deeply doubting God's paternity. It was she who helped me and taught me to have the heart of a child who lets himself be guided by his loving Father.

She is the one who helps us get up when we have been knocked to the ground and cannot find the strength to get back on our feet on our own.

I think it is really important to have this experience and, above all, to ask God for the grace of this virtue. Especially as we live in a fast-paced world where we want to have everything and everything at once. Although the root of the verbs "wait" and "hope" are not the same in English, the verb *esperar* is still used in Spanish today in both senses. The first definition of the word *espérance* from the Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales (CNRTL) is as follows: *A disposition of the soul that leads a man to consider*



in the future an important good that he desires and believes can be realized. Hope teaches patience. And, as Mum would say, patience is a virtue!

I also asked God for the virtue of strength, which ensures constancy in the face of difficulties, perseverance in the pursuit of the good, and helps us fight our fears. I knew I would not be able to do it on my own, but if I had the support of grace, I would be able to fight the good fight.

That is what hope is all about: rediscovering the order of priorities that begins with God and ends with Him, but that also manifests itself in character development and service to our neighbor.

I hope you managed to read this long message!

I love you and I am praying for you. 🌿

With You, O Lord



BERTHE LAPORTE, M.I.C.
Sister Gérard-Majella
1930-2024
Sainte-Elisabeth, Quebec

Sister Berthe's entire life was on a spiritual axis. Born on Christmas Day, she enjoyed a fulfilling childhood, rooted in a fundamentally Christian upbringing. She spent four years of high school at our school in Rimouski, especially enjoying the highlights of spiritual animation. Happily, she entered the novitiate on August 8, 1950. Once her formation was complete, it was time for a concrete and varied apostolate: teaching, including a few years in the Philippines, tasks linked to the local, provincial and general secretariats, missionary animation, the Institute's general archives in Pont-Viau and presence among the local poor. She was filled with the joy of service. This same joy accompanied her when, in 2014, she entered our health services as a beneficiary. She finally experienced perfect bliss on November 17, 2024.



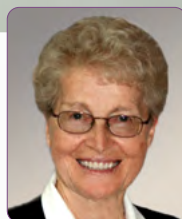
MARIA VIE CHUA, M.I.C.
Sister John of the Sacred Heart
1937-2024
Gigaquit, Philippines

Born in the Philippines of Chinese immigrant parents, Maria Vie was educated by Catholic nuns. After post-secondary studies, she studied music at Holy Ghost College in Manila. Awakened to religious life by the Legion of Mary and to our community by Sister Madeleine Delorme, she was welcomed into the novitiate on May 1, 1962. Her multiple talents and availability underpinned her community service: head of the music department at Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA), postulancy and novitiate director, provincial superior, general councillor from 1994 to 2000. Various commitments followed in Vancouver. In 2011, her health declined. After a few years in our specialized services, she experienced the joy of entering the Father's home on December 29, 2024.



MICHELLE PAQUETTE, M.I.C.
Sister Michelle-du-Sacré-Cœur
1934-2025
Montreal, Quebec

Entering the novitiate on August 8, 1954, Michelle realized her dream of giving her life to the Lord, who had seduced her from an early age. Reserved, she offered a quality presence and service in the variety of her commitments. Japan welcomed her twice, appreciating her gifts as an educator, a trainer of adults in the Christian life and her work in parishes. Back in Quebec, the Missionary Press office benefited for twenty years from her dedication in sending out our magazines *Le Précurseur* and *MIC Mission News*. The immigrants, for their part, esteemed their French teacher. Slowly, from service to service, Michelle's health deteriorated. Peaceful, silent and always in love with her Lord, she accepted the invitation to enter His Joy on January 29, 2025.



SOLANGE GARNEAU, M.I.C.
Sister Solange-Marie
1936-2025
St-Prime, Quebec

Solange inherited her father's serene faith and her mother's exceptional courage. She entered the novitiate on August 8, 1961, and in 1974 left to take charge of our school in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Her many talents, supported by prayer and an overflowing joy, favored all her insertions: in Baurès (Bolivia), a new mission in education, health and pastoral care, with the plane as transport, in Chile as a catechist and then in education in Peru. Fatigue and precarious health brought her back to Quebec in 2001, then to the health services, from where she left on February 13, 2025, to celebrate Love in the Kingdom of God, God of whom she said: *He loves me without measure.*



*Moving makes you grow, because it forces you
to leave a place, not without some palpitations
of the heart, to open up to new horizons.*

Stroll along the Délia-Tétreault riverbank, Pont-Viau, Laval.

Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.J.C.