

Montreal, July-August 1953

No. 10, Vol. XIX, 31st Year

The Precursor

The Precursor

\$1.00 a year
\$20.00 for life

Bimonthly magazine published by the
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception,
with the approbation of
His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Montreal.

Subscriptions begin with either
the July or the January issue.

2900 St. Catherine Road,
Cote des Neiges, Montreal 26, P.Q.

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Haitian Galahads

M.I.C.

In Limbe, I would have you know, we have not any male choir but we do have Damase, Henry, and Dieudonne. As long as the Lord sees fit to keep the voices of these lads clear, and strong, and vibrant with feeling, we shall not lack choristers to sing divine praises in winning tones pulsing with the warm sunshine of the Caribbean. This gay trio of altar boys holds a strange affinity to lace-trimmed surplices, oversize cassocks, huge missals, and hot candle grease. How they revel in processions! One can easily tell that such a liking is bred in their very bones by the way they march along in holy triumph, their eyes fastened on their hymnals, and all heaven resplendent in their dusky faces. Among their other loves come thick clouds of incense, stimulating sermons in Creole, lilting hymns to Maman la Vierge (the Haitians familiarly address Mary-Mama) campaigns for Church weddings (all too rare in Haiti), funerals native style, and pulling the bell rope to call the good people from the hills to church.

Although their pranks and fidgety distractions occasionally prod the devoted pastor of Limbe into calling them obstreperous spooks, in his heart of hearts he cannot help holding an especially warm spot for them. What would he ever do if they were absent from marriage masses for instance? None could call down the Holy Spirit on the wedded pair with such a vehement *Veni Creator*. They would be missed even more at burials for in Haiti, the priest must, according to tradition, go out part of the way to meet the funeral cortege singing the hymn *Benedictus*, while his acolytes pad each verse with thunderous "*Requiem æternam dona eis Domine*." You should hear the impressive intonations of our trio on these occasions!

The chanting of Mass and Vespers holds no secret for Damase, Henry, and Dieudonne. Noisily clearing his throat, Damase intones with a Creole flourish while his pals pick up the strain with such vim and vigor that one would think the Limbe church was packed with singers. A Benedictine friar keen on the fine points of Gregorian chant would probably stop up his ears at their performance and perhaps reprimand them for murdering the Latin and slaughtering the liturgical tempo. Meanwhile the trio sings and enjoys life without further complications.

Alas! It happens that life does occasionally have its ups and downs even for carefree Haitian lads. Some time ago, I noticed a cloud of sadness overcasting the usually serene features of Damase. What could be disturbing him? I waylaid him as he emerged from Church after Benediction, one Sunday afternoon.

"You seem out of sorts," I remarked, "Anything worrying you?"



Dusky brown toes dug into the dry earth for a while then Damase looked up at me all his yearning soul shining through his eyes.

"I want to be a priest." He unexpectedly burst into tears covering his face with both hands.

"Why, that is the most wonderful news a boy could give his friends," I consoled. "Why should you cry over the fact?"

"But, Sister," he wailed, "How can I ever be a priest if I have to wait and wait to finish my primary grades?"

Damase and his friends are enrolled at the public school. "Have you asked your teacher to help you out?"

"Yes, Sister, and he says that I will have to delay until some other fellow decides to join with me in order to prepare for the Primary School Certificate. Henry and Dieudonne are too young and as nobody else wants to pass those exams, the professor declares he can't be bothered preparing a lone boy for the Certificate."

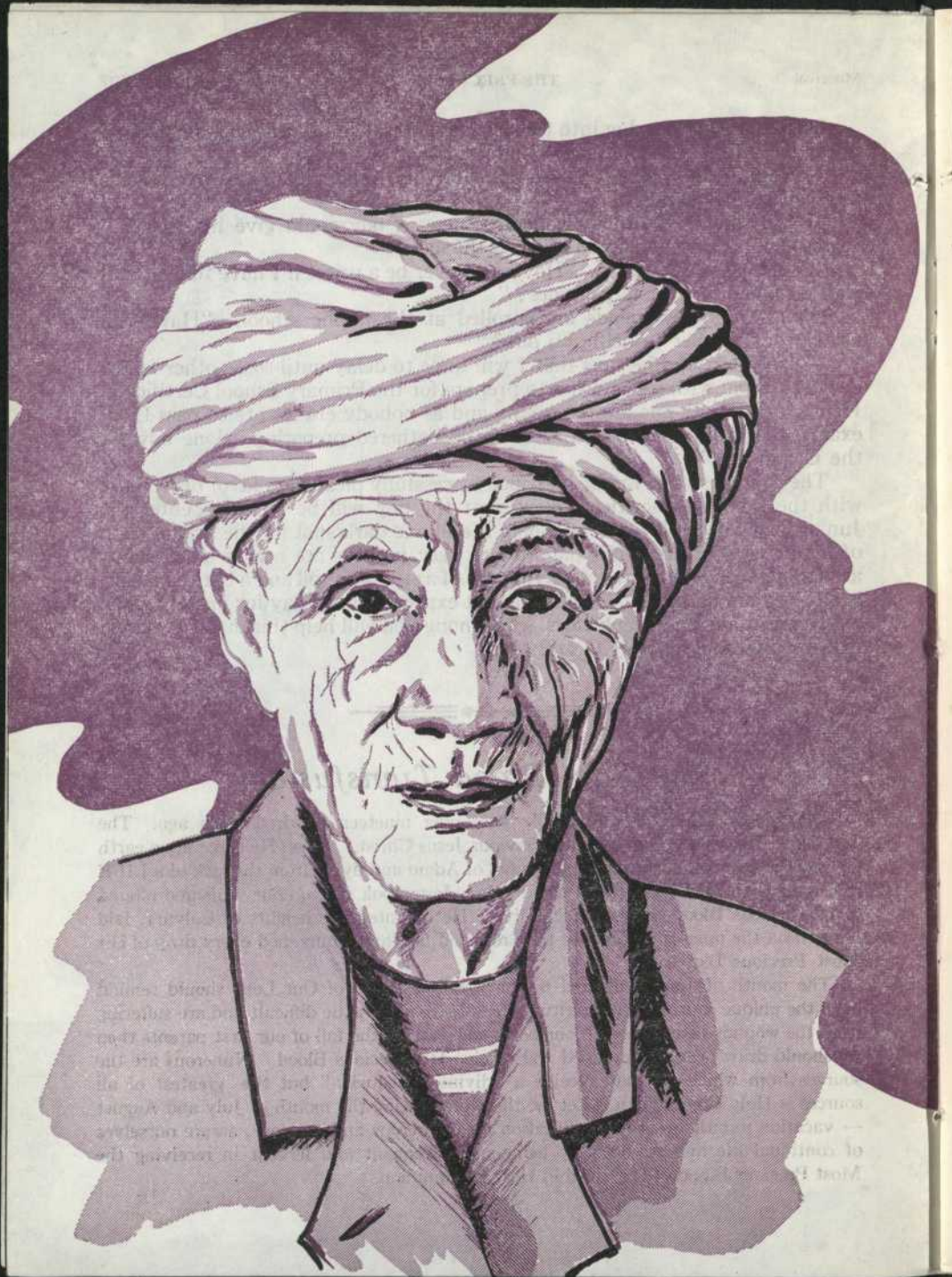
The good pastor of Limbe has since successfully pleaded in favor of Damase with the school authorities. Next year the boy will be ready to enter the Junior Seminary. Nevertheless there is still one dark spot in the bright vista of his priestly future. His parents are very poor as are nearly all peasants around here; they must sweat a living out of a stubborn soil and a bare existence is all they can produce. Damase cannot expect them to pay for his schooling.

Dear readers and benefactors, who among you will help this dusky Galahad in his search for the Holy Grail?

The First Blood Transfusion

The first Blood Transfusion took place over nineteen hundred years ago. The first Blood Donor was Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When He came upon earth He saw the souls of men injured by the fall of Adam and dying from the lack of a LIFE that only His own Divine Blood could give. Jesus took pity on our souls and offered to give us His Blood that we might live. He mounted the heights of Calvary, laid Himself on the operating Table of the Cross and for three hours shed every drop of His Most Precious Blood.

The month of July, dedicated to the Precious Blood of Our Lord should remind us of the unique source of our spiritual life. If we find virtue difficult and are suffering from the wounds bequeathed to our body and soul by the fall of our first parents then we should draw near to Our Lord and receive His Precious Blood. Numerous are the sources from which we may receive a "divine transfusion" but the greatest of all sources is Holy Communion. Let us, therefore, during the month of July and August — vacation months — when temptation are numerous and grievous, assure ourselves of continual life and strength by being more frequent and fervent in receiving the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord in Holy Communion.



Filipino Grandads

SR. ST. EDMUND(1), M.I.C.

Filipino grandfathers are an unusually contented lot. Even if time has chiseled a filagree of roads and furrows over their faces, a perennial smile illumines them with an ancient beauty all their own. As long as their strength allows they insist on taking part in the backbreaking labors of tilling the rice paddies, or in the crude hardships of the fishing fleets. When the years taking their toll bow down their once sturdy frames and set their knotty, callous hands atremble the old folk still manage to keep busy puttering about vegetable patches or tiny flower gardens, fussing around poultry yards, minding the children of their children. This latter occupation is the best-loved of all. For hours on end, with the gentle, unwearying patience of age they trudge along sun-drenched roads fat brown babies squirming in their arms and a flock of toddlers following at their heels. Children like to bring their little cups of knowledge to be filled at the founts of homely wisdom that are their hoary grandsires. There are practically no childish problems for which these fond grandads will not find the wisest solutions and virtually no question to which they cannot give satisfying answers.

Work, however, will never induce any Filipino to forego the daily gathering at the village barber-shop or cafe. There cronies exchange local gossip, comment political events, or listen to some able raconteur recalling romantic tales of piracy, desperate fights at sea, or blue-water adventures of the golden past when Manila saw her sea trade borne on Chinese Junks, or Moro craft, or Spanish galleons. Meanwhile, quids of betel nut are passed around and chewed with relish. Betel nuts are hard seeds contained in the fibrous fruit of the graceful, spineless Betel Nut Palm. They are cut into slices and mixed with lime, tobacco, and a small red fruit called *bunga* which is added to give flavor and color then this mixture is rolled in betel pepper leaves or *ikmo*. The concoction is *Masarap* (delicious) according to those with whom chewing the betel has all but become a second nature. Common to Indian and Malayan races, this habit supposedly produces pep and vigor, acts as an appetizer, and assures longevity. Compared to these benefits, what matters the slight inconvenience of mouth and teeth stained a vivid red?

Strolling homeward in the peace of the tropical evenings, listening to the unending symphony of insect life rising and falling like a prayer, the old man of the Philippines casts about the hazy landscape, an affectionate and almost protective glance. This indeed is God's Palace Beautiful and his own also. How dearly he cherishes this comely native land of his with its beaches of

1. Irma DE LADURANTAYE, Cap St. Ignace.

glistening sand, its luxuriant apparel of tropical foliage and exotic flowers, the feathery fronds of its regal palms. But this old philosopher loves all of Mother earth, not only that part where he was born and lived his peaceful life. He enjoys questioning the Madre about other lands and their peoples.

"Mother," Pedro once queried, "Do the people of your country eat rice?"

"No, Pedro," I replied "We do not grow any rice in our country because it is too cold."

"What do your people eat then? Do they buy rice from other countries?"

"No, we do not buy rice, at least not as our staple food. Our staff of life is bread."

"Mother, are there any unfortunates in those other lands you told me about? How I would like all people to be as happy as I am!"

Yes, Pedro is really and truly happy. He has everything he needs; he envies no man, fears no future, regrets no past, and wisely enjoys the present.

Untutored son of the soil and sea, he has yet taken honors in the University of Nature. There he has learned the magical art of resting contented with little, of banishing from his heart the vain desires that prey like cankerworms upon the rose of happiness. Sorrows and trials he has had like all mortals here below but they have found him serenely resigned, stoutly hopeful. He may let his grief take the upper hand for a while and loudly lament his beloved dead but always there is in his heart a respectful submissive note of resignation. I once heard a venerable old man expressing his sorrow as he knelt on the freshly mounded grave of his son who died in early manhood. "Salvio, my manly boy, why have you presumed to go on ahead into the Land of no return? Why did you leave your little ones who sadly cry after their father? O my Salvio, listen to your father; you have always been an obedient son. Come back, come back home to your wife and little ones. Let me take your place I who am grown decrepit and useless . . . But, no . . . Who am I to gainsay the heavenly Father? May His Will be done . . . He knows best."

One morning, not very long ago, our pastor learnt that eighty-year-old Nestor was very ill. Hurrying to his nipa hut, he administered the Last Sacraments as the old gentleman was not expected to last beyond the day. Nestor, however had a tenacious hold on life. He recovered and triumphantly explained.

"Thanks be to God for the Last Sacraments! I am now stronger than ever. How happy I am in the thought that I can still work for my children and grandchildren."

"How old are you.," I once ventured to ask Sergio, an old village sage.

"I am seventy-two, Madre."

"In what year were you born?"

"Oh, I think it was in 1872."

"Well, then, you should be eighty-two, don't you think?"

"Oh, no, Madre. You must be making a mistake. I am not so old as all that."

Sergio is another of those gentle grandads who will leave behind him when he goes, the shining example of a life filled with humble deeds nobly done.

Filipino patriarchs they are every one and proud am I to count them among my best and kindest friends. They constantly remind me of the beatitude, "Blessed are the meek . . ."

Azucena

SR. GENEVIEVE OF NANTERRE⁽¹⁾, M.I.C.

Azucena are beautiful, odorous flowers found in the Philippine Islands. They consist of clusters of tiny white lilies crowning tall slender stalks, unsullied purity wedded to supple firmness. In all seasons and upon all sorts of occasions are these favorite blooms used: processions, Marian pageants, weddings, funerals.

When I was assigned to Las Pinas, some time ago, I noticed among my religious doctrine class of fifty pupils, a fiery Miss with eyes deep and piercing that could become warm and gentle at times, and a small, stern mouth sometimes relieved by a magnetic smile. She bore the flowery name of Azucena and it sat strangely well upon her trim lithe figure.

For the first week however, we stood at odds with each other. She refused to recite her lessons or answer questions, kept her eyes glued to the floor, and maintained an all-around defiant attitude. This could not be allowed to go on so I took her to task one day.

"Why do you refuse to answer when you are questioned in the classroom?"

"Because I don't know the answers."

"But you seem to listen attentively when explanations are given and then, you have your manual."

The girl froze into silence and her lids slid enigmatically over her flashing brown eyes. Evidently it was no use pressing my point just then so I dismissed her remarking,

"If you want us to be friends, you must learn to be polite in the classroom and to answer when you are questioned." Azucena made a wan attempt at a generous smile and slowly went out of the room. There was something worrying her but the time was not yet ripe for confidences.

1. Genevieve St. PIERRE, Montreal.



AZUCENA GUEVARRA TAKING PART IN A PROCESSION

J. Guevarra St. Patrick's Mission

Nevertheless, from that day forward, she never failed to answer promptly when her name was called and faithfully learnt her catechism. On the margin of her first examination papers after my arrival, she scribbled: "Sister, I have not made my First Communion." So that must be the clue to her problem, I reflected.

I arranged to meet her the very next day as she came out of school and proposed, "Would you like me to prepare you for your First Holy Communion?" Happiness lit up her downcast features like a beam of sunlight and she gratefully acquiesced. "You must come on Saturdays" I cautioned. "I have no other time to give you."

Azucena came as she had promised. It was a privilege for me to watch the flowering of divine grace in this soul athirst for all things good and noble and true. We soon became fast friends and she told me the brief but tragic story of her life thus far. Her mother was a Catholic but her father was an irreligious man who had no use for religion of any kind, especially the Catholic. Most certainly would he veto this project of his elder daughter making her First Communion. Then there was a young child, Josefina, a third grader who knew next to nothing about prayers and catechism. She also must be instructed in the Faith. Azucena spoke with the enthusiasm of the newly converted declaring herself ready to face her father's displeasure. It was resolved that Josefina would receive private instructions beside following the Saturday doctrine classes as she knew more Tagalog than English.

All went well for a few weeks then it became evident that Josefina really did not know sufficient English to keep up with her sister. I broke the news one Saturday. Azucena was disconcerted and she vehemently protested, "Oh, Sister, please don't put her off. We want so much to make our First Communion together! She understands all the questions and answers perfectly when I explain them to her in Tagalog. I will coach her so that she will surely be ready on time." It was both touching and amusing to witness Big Sister's earnestness and Little Sister's attention while the former punctuated her voluble explanations with extravagant gesticulations and soulful looks into Josefina's smiling eyes.

At home the storm of parental opposition raged as soon as the father discovered his youngest child with a catechism in her hands. Rudely snatching it from her he sent it flying to the corner of the room. Seeing Josefina run to pick it up he forgot himself so far as to beat her mercilessly.

On the following Saturday, both children faithfully showed up as usual for their catechism lesson. While they leafed together through an album of colored representations of the life of Christ, they paused for a long, long time at the picture of the finding of Jesus in the Temple. Azucena looking at me with flaming, courageous resolution written all over her face passionately declared "We also must be about our heavenly Father's business . . . We must obey God first and papa afterwards. We must make our First Communion even if papa does not want us to do so."

It was not an easy task to win the father's consent. A devoted lay teacher zealous and tactful decided to visit the family and to lay the problem before the family council; here as in all Oriental countries, the father is not the only one to reckon with in family affairs. Relatives have their word to say and that word is often final. Fortunately, in this case, the grandmother, uncle, and aunt all Catholics, took sides for the children although they thought it wiser not to let the father know about their decision. The date of the great day was fixed on August 15. On the eve, Azucena ran in to tell me how worried she felt over having to make her first confession; how could she ever manage to remember all the sins she had committed since she was born, she wanted to know. This perplexity cleared, the girl exposed another alarm, "Sister, I have an enemy . . ." She heaved a meaningful sigh.

"An enemy?"

"Yes Sister, you know I quarrelled with Carolina three weeks ago. We have not spoken to each other since and the whole class knows about this."

A few hours later, the two "enemies" were reconciled and Azucena emerged from the confessional with the look of one who has just thrown off a crushing burden.

The only worry that now remained to ruffle her dearly bought serenity was the fact that she did not know where or how she could secure a white toilette for this great occasion. What treasure troves the cases received from our kind benefactors often prove to be! Sister Superior found in one of those but recently received from Canada, white dresses and veils, prayer books and rosaries. Sr. St. Edmund completed the preparations with pretty crowns of natural flowers.

Early on the morning of Our Lady's Assumption, the pair slipped from their home and hastened to our convent chapel. How happy felt these two who had suffered in order to possess the Emmanuel within their loving hearts! We Sisters joined in their fervent plea for the conversion of their beloved father.

After Mass, the mother and her little girls were invited to have breakfast at the convento. At first, Azucena appeared to be still under the charm of her communion. After a while, however, she recovered her gay spirits, and in the excess of her jubilation she sang and danced and boisterously expressed her thankfulness while Josefina looked on complacently.

When papa finally discovered that his orders had been flouted, he violently vented his bad humor pesting about religion in general, and Sisters in particular. What right had they to meddle in his family affairs? All the relatives rose up in arms to defend the children and their teachers, so that papa after thinking things over, determined to feign complete indifference.

Dear friends of the missions will you not say some special prayer for this erring soul that it may soon bask in the sunshine of God's grace?

Our Lady

provides sweet potatoes

SR. ST. BRIDGET⁽¹⁾, M.I.C.

From her throne in celestial glory, our Blessed Mother does not forget the days when, as a humble housewife in an obscure Judean hamlet, she was daily kept busy preparing wholesome, appetizing meals for her two Carpenters. She remembers the flavor of our earthly concoctions and is not above providing a dish of sweet potatoes if and when these are needed to bring a particular sinner's conversion.

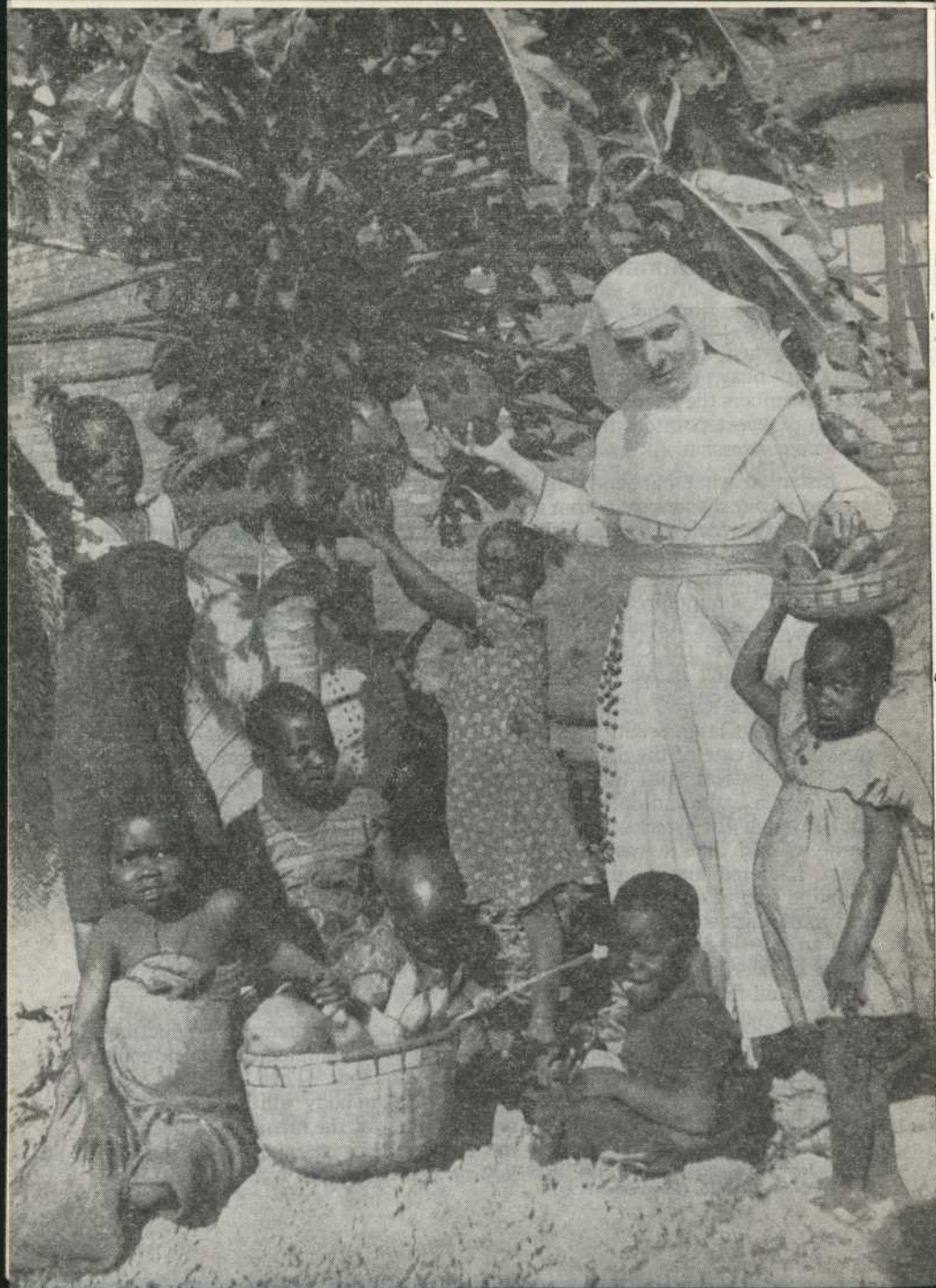
Listen to what happened in Mzambazi. One day, a few husky natives arrived at our dispensary with a stretcher case, a middle aged man in the last stages of tuberculosis. The Sister-Nurse, Sr. St. Yves⁽²⁾, after making him as comfortable as possible in one of the hospital huts, broached the subject of religious affiliation, for the patient's condition was critical. "Where do you pray?" she inquired. A sardonic leer twisted his emaciated face and in metallic tones he stated "Oh, I used to belong to the Free Church but I switched over to the Cipango because this sect allows polygamy. Anyhow, I hate preaching in all forms. Put that in your pipe and smoke it." A rasping cough cut his harangue short.

Some days later, Sr. St. Yves obliged to leave on urgent business, entrusted me with the care of the dispensary and gave me special directions concerning the T. B. patient with the cynical turn of mind. I was to recommend his case to Our Lady and do all in my power to reach out help to the immortal soul through the wreckage of the body shattered by disease. One evening as he whined that it was impossible for him to snatch even a few winks of sleep, I offered him a miraculous medal reflecting within myself that even if he did accept out of sheer egotism still Our Lady would not abandon this wayward black son of hers. Alas, he flatly declined my offer. With a fervent plea to the Refuge of sinners, I surreptitiously slipped the blessed medal under his sleeping mat and went away with a lighter heart; somehow, Our Lady would find a way to thaw this hardened soul.

Days elbowed one another and still my patient remained irreducible. As I brought in his *sima* (corn mush) one evening he complained that he could no longer digest this, the national-dish of Nyasaland. Then he added wistfully, "I wish I had some sweet potatoes — But nobody will bring me any." It just happened that we had lately received a few at the mission so I hastened

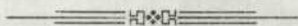
1. Jeannette CARON, St. Jean de la Lande, P. Q.

2. Yvette RICARD, Grandmere, P. Q.



to offer him some, "Oh, how very kind you are! Thank you! Thank you." There was so much sincerity in his thankfulness that I felt Our Lady herself must have arranged to send those sweet potatoes just on time.

Henceforth the dying man appeared as eager to be received into the one true Church as he had before shown himself contemptuous of its teachings. He proved his goodwill by sending away his wives, keeping only one. All praise to Our Lady whose motherly intervention snatched this soul from eternal perdition.



RUMPHI, NYASALAND

White lilies for dusky Maria

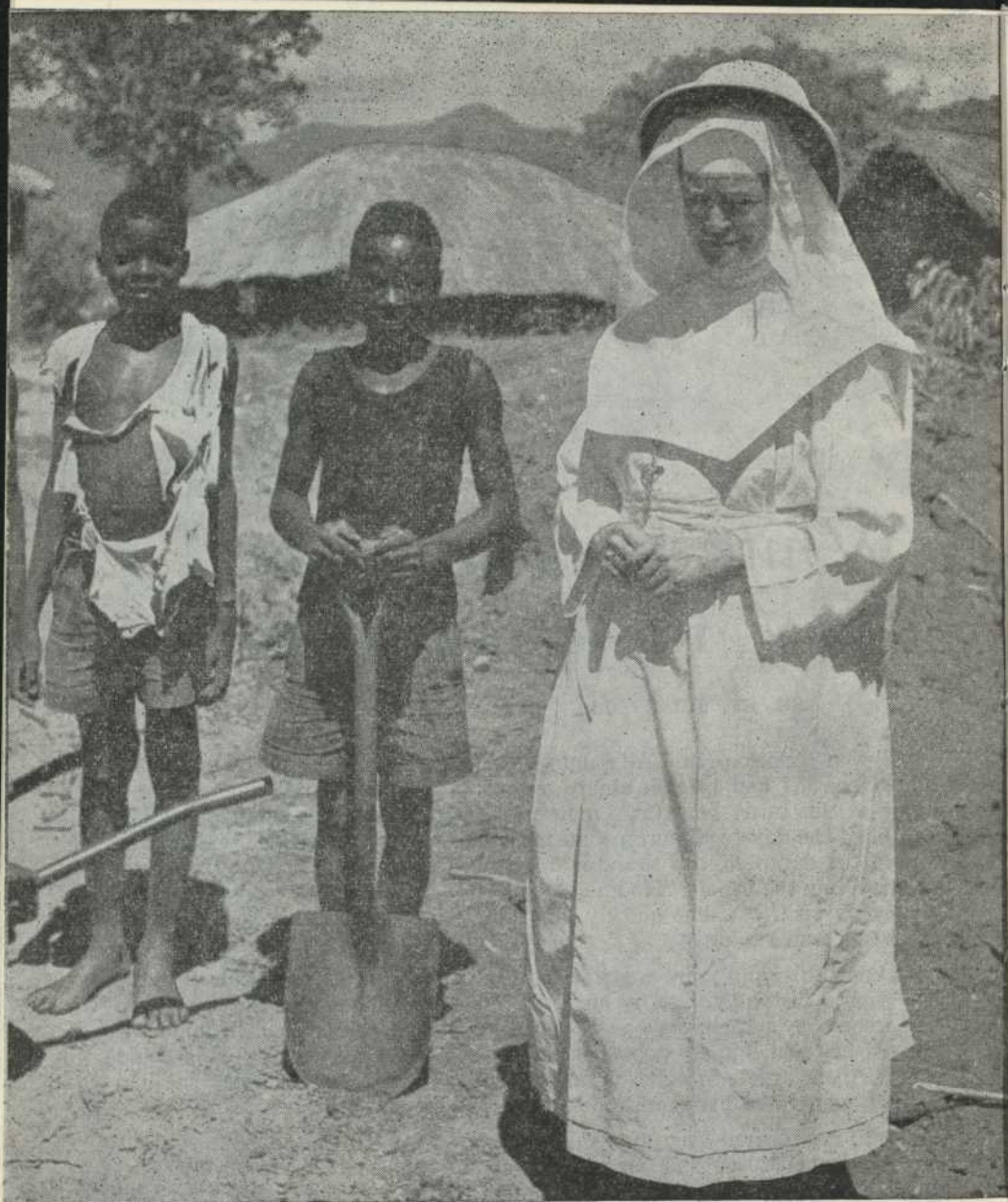
SR. ST. JULIE, M.I.C. (Beatrice Tessier, WOONSOCKET, R.I.)

Eleven o'clock p. m. All Saints' Day was fading away. With my native aide, Teresa, I had spent it almost entirely at the dispensary, where we met again at this tardy hour for a maternity case. As I reflected that this last call filled the day to the brim someone shouted outside, "Hodie?" Coming out of the darkness this sound startled me as something uncanny. Instead of answering the usual, "Hodine" (come in) I inquired on the purpose of the stranger's visit. "Come quickly, my child's illness has taken a bad turn," pleaded a man's voice.

I knew this *child*. She was a young woman brought here a couple of weeks ago from a distant village by her mother-in-law. When I accepted to keep her among my patients in one of the hospital huts, I only had in mind the cure of her soul, for her poor emaciated body was beyond any help I could give. An incurable victim of tuberculous peritonitis and pleurisy she had further aggravated her condition by the use of fetish medicines.

Until now it had been impossible for me to broach the religious subject, for her mother-in-law and her polygamous husband kept a wary eye on her. But Our Lady had planned something special for this last hour of All

SISTER ST. BRIDGET
(JEANNETTE CARON,
St. Jean de la Lande)
Picking PAWPAWS



SR. ST. JULIE (BEATRICE TESSIER, WOONSOCKET, R. I.)

LATELY ASSIGNED TO OUR RUMPHI MISSION

Saints' Day! For a moment I fancied that the celestial inhabitants gloriously celebrating the commemoration of the Dogma of the Assumption paused in their blissful celebrations to cast a compassionate glance on the mud-walled hut where a young African woman lay dying. Would they not intercede for the salvation of this soul so soon to leave its mortal prison?

When Tereza, whom I had dispatched with a bottle of water and pressing exhortation to win over the moribund returned with a sheepish look of defeat on her face I started out alone towards the hospital huts. It was one of those moonlit tropical nights when the very air seems permeated with mysterious subdued radiance. Hyenas or leopards might lurk in the shadows, but I must be on my way to deliver this soul from the dragon's clutches. Fervently I fingered my Rosary and hurried along. As I entered the rude hut the flickering of the traditional branch fire allowed me a glimpse of the grotesque figures of sleepers muffled up in their coarse mats. In the farthest recess of the hut, the patient lay; her eyes dark with anguish yet shining with hope were riveted on me. I knelt beside her, felt her pulse and administered some medicine I had brought. Then I ventured: "Amama, I believe that God will soon call you to heaven; are you willing to go?"

"Enya!" (yes) but please relieve me." I had already tried every remedy but to no avail. Upon her request however, I decided to give her palliative treatment and asked for a messenger to call Tereza. While the mother-in-law went to fetch my helper, I seized the opportunity for summarily instructing my patient. The Blessed Virgin to whom I had confided her, inspired me to recite out loud, in Citumbuka, the invocation "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." She eagerly repeated the prayer after me. Then I had her make acts of faith, hope, and charity, and of regret for her sins.

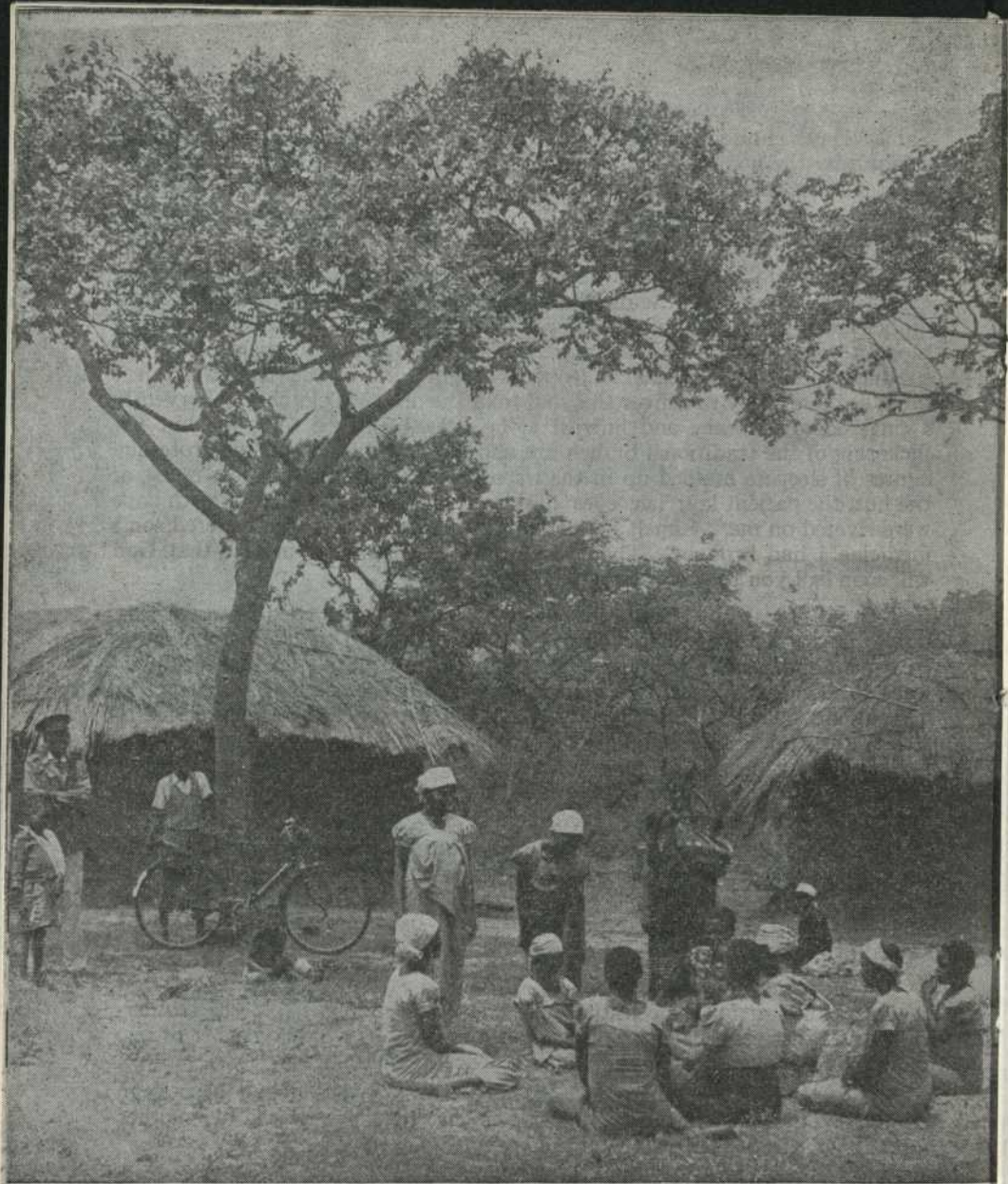
The clear "Enya" she gave to all my questions persuaded me to baptize her. I was wiping the sacred waters off her forehead when the mother-in-law returned with Tereza. After we had given her the treatment Maria lay back exhausted on her mother-in-law's lap. I bade her good night and she looked at me with eyes brimful of gratitude.

The next morning I learned that Maria had exchanged during the night her miserable hut for the celestial mansions above. When I told the mother-in-law how distressed I felt at having been unable to save this mother of two children she spoke gratefully of Maria's peaceful death.

She had perfectly understood the great privilege that had been hers; so much so that she wanted to reveal it to the one who replaced her mother and through her, to the people of her distant village.

With a crown of white lilies adorning her dusky brow she walks eternal trails, among the ranks of the blessed in Paradise.

The Church in Nyassa counts one more advocate to plead before the throne of God on behalf of those who still wander outside the Fold.



THE MUD AND WATTLE PRIVATE WARDS USED BY OUR PATIENTS IN RUMPHI

First Communicant at 70

SR. MONICA OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT(1). M.L.C.,

Before the statue of Our Lady enthroned in what only a few years hence was a Buddhist shrine built of rare old timber, forty Japanese girls sang an evening hymn to Maria Sama (Honorable Mother Mary) as climax to the blessed day they had spent in recollection at our Tokyo Cenacle. Hardly had the pious strains died away when a voice called outside the sliding panels used as doors. "Gomen Kudasai! (noble obstacle)" In purely Japanese houses, door bells are not used.

"Nan no go yo" (what is your noble business?) asked the portress of the young lady who stood at the entrance.

"O jama itashimasu, (I am embarrassing you)," murmured the visitor as she bowed low. "My name is Hasegawa Akiko, I hope you will forgive me for intruding upon you, without any proper introduction. I did not know there were any Sisters living in this part of the city where I am at present visiting an old uncle of mine who is paralyzed. Hearing the hymn to the Blessed Mother, I realized that there must be a church or a chapel somewhere in the vicinity. You see, I am a Catholic and so is my uncle. Last year as his chronic illness suddenly took a turn for the worse, we all expected that he would die. I prepared him as best as I could, giving him short simple explanations about the principal mysteries of our holy faith; then I baptized him as he was supposed to have only a few hours to live. But he rallied although he has never been able to leave his bed. I feel responsible for his further religious instruction; nevertheless, as I am working outside of Tokyo, there is no possibility for me to attend to the matter myself. Could you Sisters do anything for him?"

We promised to visit the patient as soon as possible. On the very next day we set out to call at the address given by Miss Hasegawa. The old gentleman shivering under his futon (padded blanket) although it was very warm outside, greeted us pleasantly and eagerly accepted our offer to teach him enough doctrine to enable him to receive the Sacraments.

Twice a week, during three whole months, we called on the sick man who considered us as messengers from heaven as he put it in quaint Oriental phrasing. We could not help admiring the gentle virtues of this aged patient who endured the pains of sickness without ever complaining and who showed such considerate regard for the well-being of others around him.

On Good Friday, Rev. B. Larose, O. P. visited him to prepare him for his confession in view of bringing him Holy Communion later on. At first, our

1. Monique Cloutier, Ottawa.

friend protested against putting the pastor to such inconvenience. "Why should Father take so much trouble for me?" he exclaimed, "I can very well make my confession to you Sisters and you could tell him about it." After Father Larose's visit, he remarked "That gentleman gives me the clear impression of being another Christ come down to this poor earth of ours."

On April 18, in a little tile-roofed house all but hidden in an obscure alley in the heart of the great city, a first communicant of seventy received in his shriven heart, the King of glory, father of the poor and health of the sick. On this bright spring morning, Jesus whispered, to this soul of goodwill as of yore he whispered to Zaccheus, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Since then, the daughter of this convert has also asked to be instructed in a religion which gives its adepts such unshaken, consoling convictions about a happy eternity. The old okusama (wife) whose inscrutable features never betray the secret of her heart, has unbent a little and now listens attentively at the doctrine lessons while pretending to be very busy with her preparations for serving tea. May this entire family soon find peace and security within the one true Church.

SR. MONICA OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT (MONIQUE CLOUTIER, OTTAWA)

thinks there is not in the whole wide world a mission to compare with hers in Tokyo, Japan.



Sotsugyo

SR. OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY(1), M.I.C.

Graduation whether from the kindergarten or the university is always a solemn affair in Japan. It unfolds according to identical rites from one end of the country to the other, wherever youth is on the march along the road of science.

Only one member from each family is authorized to be present at the ceremony. Because of the great number of children in each graduating class, one pupil, usually the one who ranks first in scholarship, is called upon to receive the diplomas in the name of all the graduates.

Now, what does one really do at a sotsugyo in Japan, you would like to know. Most important of all are the speeches. After the lusty rendering of the school song by the pupils the Principal stiffly ascends the tribune and launches forth on a stereotyped discourse extolling the benefits of a liberal education such as dispensed in the schools of the land of the Rising Sun. The pupils with the highest notes now step forward and according to the rules of a strict etiquette controlling their every step and move, proceed to receive the much desired diplomas in the name of their class mates. Then all sit back on their heels, Japanese fashion, while the guests of honor, the Mayor, representatives from the Ministry of education, noted alumnae tender congratulations and bestow good advice. This lasts for about two hours. Now the children will be allowed to limber their cramped legs, you exclaim . . . Not so fast! Notables among the parents are expected to present their thankful homage to the school authorities who have devoted themselves to the training of their young hopefuls. The strains of the graduation song proclaim the closing of this first part of the sotsugyo and usher in the second part called *sha on kai*, (feast of gratitude) in which the pupils offer a parting gift to their Alma Mater and a banquet to the professors.

March 19 saw the graduation of eleven pupils from our Commercial Course. The ceremony was opened by the singing of a hymn in praise of Seibo Maria Sama (Honorable Mother Mary). How proud these girls were to receive their diplomas for which they had worked so hard taking these lessons after following the regular High School Course in Japanese. As graduation souvenir we offered copies of *Life Giving Truth* a book by Mother Britt, religious of the Sacred Heart.

1. Rita Blais, Thetford Mines, P.Q.



FIRST AND SECOND GRADERS LIKE THEIR BIG LITTLE RED AND PINK SCHOOLHOUSE,
WAKAMATSU, JAPAN

One of the Japanese teachers congratulated the graduating class in Sister Superior's name expressing the wish that they would always keep faithful remembrance of their Alma Mater. "A few among you," she wound up, "have gone the whole way on the road that leads to Christ, the Life Giving Truth, and every one of you has learned here at least the essential of the greatest of all sciences. Be true to the voice of your conscience if you want to know genuine happiness here below and everlasting bliss above. You will always be welcome at St. Francis Xavier's School whenever you call." It was now the turn of the Juniors to offer gifts and flowers to their *neesama* (older sisters).

The graduates then took over for the *sha on kai* celebrations. Seated together at table they enjoyed reminiscing their first experiences of life in a Catholic school. One recalled how happy she had felt the first time she was present at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; the altar decked with flowers and votive lights, the mysterious atmosphere of peaceful recollection,

the pious singing of Church hymns, all this would forever remain enshrined in her memory, she assured. Others rose to thank the Sisters for teaching them to know the only true God and to appreciate eternal values. All were unanimous in expressing heartfelt gratitude for the privilege that had been theirs to attend a Catholic School.



Honouring St. Francis Xavier

Since the fourth centenary of the death of St. Francis Xavier took place last December many plans have been made in different parts of the world to do him honour. He was a Spaniard, so it is particularly interesting to see how the Spaniards marked the occasion. They have done it on a big scale, and, officially, by the Ministry of Education. An Institute "to create better understanding between the east and west on the highest levels" is being erected in Madrid, and it will be named after St. Francis Xavier.

The official of the Ministry who made the first announcement regarding it said very truly that "the only way in which the people of the East can acquire an understanding of Western spiritual values is through contact with the real life of the West", hence it is planned to open this Institute to take 150 students, Catholics and pagans, selected by the missions of the East. It has been stressed by the Government that its action is not in any way motivated by political or economic interests, it is purely an effort to bring together the representatives of two worlds — that of St. Francis Xavier, one of the greatest of Spaniards, and of the races to whom he gave his life.

T. F. Ryan



True Sanctity

True sanctity does not consist in trying to live without creatures. It consists in using creatures in order to do the will of God. It consists in using God's creation in such a way that everything we touch and see and use and desire gives a new glory to God.

To be a saint means to pass through the world gathering fruits for heaven from every tree and reaping God's glory in every field and farm. The saint is one who is in contact with God in every possible way, in every possible direction. He is united to God in the depths of his own soul, and he sees and touches God in everything and everyone around him. Everywhere he goes, the world rings and resound (though silent) with the deep pure harmonies of God's glory. Everything he touches is a sanctus bell and a call to adoration.

"Self Denial and the Christian" Commonwealth.



Homefront

To make the missions better known, to encourage Catholics to take a practical part in the work of the missions, and to encourage the Sisters assigned to the circulation department to make the most of their opportunities.



at Missionners

tical interest in the work of apostolic laborers in the field afar, such is the mission department of our review, "THE PRECURSOR."



PROVIDING NEEDY MISSIONS ALL OVER THE WORLD WITH CLOTHING, MEDICINE, ETC.

IS ALSO SHARING IN THE APOSTOLATE

Missionaries

is interested in the work of apostolic laborers in the field. They are the missionaries of the world, and their work is the work of the Holy Spirit.



EVEN DELVING INTO THE MYSTERIES OF THE CAMERA

HELPS THE NOBLEST OF ALL CAUSES

Letter from Hong Kong

Dear Sister St. Stephen(1),

It seems years and years ago since you left Hong Kong. We may not reasonably hope to meet you again here on earth but we firmly believe in and look forward to the eternal reunion since we are now Christians.

Before World War II, while I was a pupil at Tak Sun, a Sister once told us about the life of Jesus; I was deeply moved at the recital of His Passion and death upon the Cross. Since then I had always felt in my heart a strong sympathy for the person of the Savior. This feeling never completely left me even through the terrible upheaval brought about by the fall of Hong Kong; I wanted even then to become a Catholic. This desire grew with the years while I attended Precious Blood School, but I never spoke to any one about it until I met Sister Marie Alvarez and you.

During the summer of 1952, Sr. Marie Alvarez(2) requested Rev. Father Toner to visit my family. He helped us along on our way to Christ. After the usual course of religious instruction we were allowed to be baptized. This happy event took place on Sunday, December 29, 1952, in Saint Theresa's Church with Father Orlando presiding. On the following morning we made our First Holy Communion at Tak Sun. Kwok Kay, now called Beda Lawrence, studies with the Jesuit Fathers while Teresa Marie (that's my Christian name) has enrolled at the Maryknoll School.

Mother is terribly worried. Her mother, three of her brothers, her sister and her sisters-in-law who formerly lived in Shameen, are undergoing molestation at the hands of the villagers in their native place. A few months ago, one of her brothers was condemned by the People's Court on the grounds of his being a landowner, to five or six years of imprisonment. Unable to face this situation, his wife committed suicide. Their two children now wander about the streets, ragged and famished, as not even their relatives are allowed to give them any food. Another of mother's brothers who worked for the Nationalists before the liberation, is narrowly watched by the Reds although he still enjoys nominal freedom. The family will soon know the pangs of hunger for their provision of rice has been reduced in such a manner that they now have only for about a month to eat and the harvest is still very far away. Please, Sister, out of your charity, pray for these unfortunates.

If you visit Sr. Marie Alvarez' family, kindly give her venerable mother my most respectful regards. Tell her not to worry over her daughter for

1. Aurore Plouffe, Montreal.

2. Noella Brisson, Cornwall, Ont.



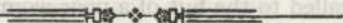
SR. ST. PETER APOSTLE (LEOCADIE LANDRY, ST. JEAN L'EVANGELISTE)

DISTRIBUTES CLOTHING TO THE REFUGEES SWARMING IN HONG KONG

Our Lady will not fail to protect her. She is needed in Hong Kong to work at the salvation of souls. Tell her and her dear ones that our family here consider Sr. Marie Alvarez as the very best friend we have ever had.

My mother sends you, dear Sister, most respectful greetings to which I join my own.

PHYLLIS IP



These are days of great danger. But they are days of great opportunity, greater than the Faith has known for centuries. The world stands today at the crossroads and men and nations are having to choose, *MUST* choose, between Communism and Christianity. This means in most cases a choice between Communism and the Catholic Church. Men today are hungry for a cause, a faith in which to believe. Unless they have a live and intelligently-held Christianity which offers them all this, men are left unsatisfied. I have often wondered whether Catholics themselves realize that they alone have the answer (to Communism) . . . that the Church has the answer to all modern problems."

Douglas Hyde



HAITI

Mothers rejoice in Roche a Bateau

SR. ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI(1), M.I.C.

On January 15, 1951, a new work was inaugurated at our out-of-the-way mission center. Do not think that we have here well equipped hospitals where patients are looked after by kind nurses and regularly attended by doctors: when one knows the conditions in which our poor people live, one may well wonder how every case of childbirth does not turn into hopeless sepsis. Expectant mothers are deprived of any other care but that given by midwives ignorant of all hygienic methods and without any proper training, with the result that one-third of the babies die of tetanus a few days after birth.

One day I was called to the hut of a poor woman suffering from puerperal fever; what I saw of stark misery in that smoky hut while I tried to alleviate the patient's terrible pain, made me resolve to do something promptly to improve sanitary conditions. What did it matter if my efforts until now had met with utter failure? I must at all costs keep on trying for the sake of the mothers and the babies whose lives were endangered by the age-old superstitious practices surrounding childbirth in this island.

As I rode back home over the wooded hills, I made a mental blueprint of my plans for the foundation of a maternity center. The first thing to do was to procure the services of a trained Catholic midwife who could be relied upon to introduce modern methods. She would need an inexhaustible fund of tact, and firmness, and courage, for superstition dies hard among the conservative

1. Simone Lebeuf, FORTIERVILLE, P. Q.

country population exceedingly wary and suspicious of the white man's ways. Ermina, a respectable young lady, religious and devoted, would be an ideally suited candidate for this great and difficult work of mercy. When I tentatively broached the subject to her she showed herself surprised and diffident; but as I went on emphasizing the importance of the service she would be rendering her beloved Haiti, she finally consented to talk things over with her elder sister who is head of the family since the death of their parents.

On the following day, she announced that with her sister's approval, she was ready to begin her training. In order to prevent any disillusion which might later tempt her to leave the work when difficulties cropped up, I took care to point to her the seriousness of this undertaking. This would be a call for complete devotedness and unselfish service to the poorest of the poor. "Will you be always ready and willing," I probed, "To answer every call of the day or of the night? To care for the poor even when you know perfectly well they will only too often repay you with ingratitude? To overcome the difficulties that beset all pioneers working for the well being of the people?" Ermina was silent for a while, then she rose and smiled, that rare comprehensive smile of hers and resolutely replied, "Mother, I am ready."

The director of Les Cayes Hospital, acceding to my request with considerate kindness, agreed to give Ermina every advantage. In order to prepare her for practical training in the maternity wards, I kept her at my dispensary for a while to teach her obstetrical terms and render her familiar with the technique of giving injections and dispensing ordinary medication.

At Les Cayes, the doctors showed great interest in the venture and Ermina made rapid progress much to their satisfaction and ours. Nine months later she returned to Roche a Bateau proud possessor of a midwife certificate. How thankful and elated she felt when I introduced her into a new white and green maternity clinic! Thanks to generous benefactors from the homeland we had been able to furnish these modest quarters with necessary equipment. It was a real treat for me to watch my faithful Haitian helper timidly opening cupboard doors and table drawers uttering all the while little cries of surprised satisfaction. Never in her life had she seen such an enchanting display of dainty layettes, perfumed powder and soap, neat lingerie for the expectant mothers. With eager hands she smoothed out the spotless sheets on the clinical table, inspected the first aid kit, tried the weights on the baby scales.

Ermina now answers to the name of Miss, a title assumed by registered nurses in Haiti. For her all has not always been plain sailing. She met with considerable opposition from the *commeres* (grandmothers) who resent foreign ways and cling to the old, unsanitary methods of the past. When she first tried to wash a newborn baby, all the old ladies in the neighborhood grimly prophesied that death would ensue in a few short hours. No such catastrophe occurred, however, so younger women slyly winked at one another and openly took sides for Miss. Within a few months she had won that part of the campaign. Then she resolutely kept on advocating modern methods of letting mother and child have a generous share of fresh air contrary

to the Haitian custom of bundling both up in filthy rags and tightly closing doors and windows. The most wonderful part of this reform was that early baptisms became the rule instead of being the exception.

Gradually, Miss won the respect and consideration of our people for her gentle kindness, her devotedness, and her expert ministrations. At first she was called partly because the mothers wanted to get the pretty baby clothes, perfumed soap and powder. They soon learnt that Miss put a string on all her gifts which went only to the offspring of legitimate marriages. In all other cases, she gave good care and needed medication while she urged the couple to have their union rectified as soon as possible. No fee was ever requested as her salary is assured by the government.

This work of the Maternity presents numerous advantages. It helps a great deal in the crusade for the rehabilitation of marriages, promotes a desirable sense of security in poor families, brushes away the cobwebs of superstitious practices and lowers the rate of infant mortality. Every Wednesday the clinic is opened for consultation to expectant or nursing mothers.

Our beloved first pastor, Bishop Collignon, the Oblate Fathers in charge of mission stations, the Haitian doctors are all loud in their praise of our Roche a Bateau Maternity. Our devoted Bishop is its most prominent benefactor. With Miss Ermina I say to all the courageous workers of our Mission Sewing Circles a most heartfelt thank you for their share in this worthy undertaking.

May I be allowed to make a suggestion to you, charitable readers? If you are looking around for some occasion to put the Golden Rule into practice, just remember that sending one dollar each to help launch one black baby on the road of life will help us maintain the work so auspiciously initiated.

Dearth of Priests in the Philippine Islands

Practically everything here is Catholic. You can give anybody — the jeep driver, the policeman, the officer — a holy picture or medal and he will always receive it most gratefully and kiss it with reverence.

But there is only one priest to every 7,000 Catholics. Eighty-five percent of the people die without the Sacraments. I suppose only 10 or 20 percent ever go to Confession.

The wonder is that the people are able to keep their Faith so strong with so little help.

Pictures of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady are everywhere, in the buses, restaurants, homes. You tip your hat and bless yourself whenever you pass a church.

In a parish of 40,000 Catholics may be 1,000 attend Sunday Mass, and a handful receive Communion. The other 39,000 have one Mass a year in their districts on fiesta day. The few priests are occupied mostly with Baptisms, weddings, funerals, and processions.

Crusade Doings

SR. JEANNE OF ORLEANS(1), M.I.C.

Many among our pupils are enthusiastic members of the Crusade. They never miss a meeting and earnestly endeavor to put the good advice received into daily practice. Thus these children are prepared to be leaders in the spiritual renovation of their country. A few are from the national school, some from the ranks of the philosophers in Sr. Jean Louis'(2) class, the greater number from the clan of mischievous, lovable rascals under the patient guidance of Sr. Margaret of the Angels(3).

Every Sunday, the chaplain of the Crusade presides the meetings. Thanks to his inspiring talks, the children have been made aware that they can and must really help to bring the world closer to God which is what mankind needs so very much today. By doing the little things they are asked to do, they are training themselves for the day when Christ will ask them to do greater things. To keep their young lives God-centered, they assist at Mass, receive Holy Communion at least once a month, daily recite a few chosen prayers, and make a careful brushing up of conscience to see that sin does

1. Jeanne d'Arc NOLIN, Quebec.
2. Rita PAGEAU, MONTREAL.
3. Marguerite Maltais, CHICOUTIMI, P.Q.



SR. JEANNE OF ORLEANS
(SR. JEANNE D'ARC NOLIN,
QUEBEC)





YOUNG LADIES OF LIMBE WHO SING IN THE CHURCH CHOIR, HAITI.

*On the left, Sr. St. Germain d'Auxerre (Germaine Lefrancois, Longueuil)
Superior of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Limbe.*

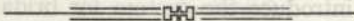
not mar the beauty of their souls. Moreover, two are chosen each week to help me in the giving of catechism lessons to the grown-ups; they interpret or improve my faltering creole. How proud they are to be trained as future apostles!

The summer holidays were ushered in this year by a frolicsome excursion to Calumet. Sr. Jean Louis came along to help me control the capers of these twenty-three girls with exquisite rhythm pulsing in every inch of their wiry black bodies. During the hike to the foot of the wooded slopes, they sang gay Crusade songs at the top of their voices. Of course they felt somewhat tired after so much exertion, so, before tackling the steep ascent to Calumet, we called a halt of fifteen minutes to give them time to munch a piece of dry bread. The pinch of poverty is too keenly felt all over the island for children to grow fussy about jam or butter; as long as they have enough bread to eat they are willing to forego the "trimmings."

Slowly climbing up tier after tier, we paused once in a while to admire the lush vegetation all about us and to revel in the colorful rendez-vous of sun and shadow upon the higher peaks.

It was nearly noon when we finally reached our destination. Although the Baptist sect has made many adepts in this district far distant from Catholic mission centers, the villagers greeted us pleasantly and soon surrounded us with cries of "Teach us the doctrine! Teach us the doctrine!" While the picnickers enjoyed themselves under Sr. Jean Louis' guidance, I settled down under the shade of a huge tree and began asking the simplest catechism questions: "Who made you?" "M'pas connais" (I don't know)." This was the only answer most of them could give. What a lot of apostolic work there is to be accomplished in these distant country places where there has never been any resident pastor and where religious ignorance is rife. After a while, I called my Crusaders and had them sing their hymns and songs for the benefit of the grown ups who had never heard anything so wonderful. Old mummies proudly exclaimed over the feats of these little girls of Haiti.

Calumet, it seems, has been made a better place to live in, since the Crusaders have passed through. Thanks be to God for that. The Crusade aims at making our holy religion better known and loved wherever its members pass or dwell.



CHINA

Chinese Catholics send Message to Holy Father

A group of Catholics in Red China, ready to die for their Faith, have managed to get a message of heroic loyalty through to the Holy Father.

"Most Holy Father: The Church in China is today in a difficult and dangerous situation; newspapers constantly publish calumnies against the Catholic Church; in this long period of deceptions and threats accompanied by brazen violence we do not dare think of the future that awaits us.

"We ask Your Holiness to pray that God will pardon the faults of our father-land and grant us His true peace.

"Holy Father, we are a group of your children, weak and inexperienced, but very eager to sacrifice ourselves for the Church; we are ever ready to be imprisoned or to shed our blood in testimony of the truth announced by Jesus Christ.

"We wish to remain bound to the Divine will by remaining faithful in our obedience to the Pope; we wish to tread the road that leads to Heaven, carrying our glorious cross.

"We beg you, Holy Father, to bless our resolutions, to pray for us, your humble children that the Omnipotent God will make use of our weakness as a means of carrying out His holy will and that the Catholic Church in China will, one day, be able to develop strong, and give glory to God for ages to come."

Fides

Weddings in Cuba

SR. IRENE OF JESUS(1), M.I.C.

In our *pueblos* where poverty holds sway, the marriage ceremonial is very simple. After a few months of courting, the young man accompanies his beloved to a public notary to draw up the matrimonial contract. The bride is then welcomed, without further complication, into the family of her in-laws.

The very few who receive the nuptial blessing do so in the evening. In such cases, the civil act is drawn up in church; the notary sets his little table beside the altar where the wedded pair sign the papers and pay the fee.

According to mundane traditions, Church weddings in Cuba must have a backdrop of elaborate decorations and fashionable *toilettes*. This explains why the poor are scarcely ever married in Church.

Catholic Actionists have started a campaign destined to rectify the Cuban mentality in this respect. The devoted pastor of Manguito is putting all his endeavors in trying to introduce the custom for bridal couples of receiving the nuptial blessing at holy Mass, instead of in the evening. As a powerful incentive he has not merely canceled the customary fee but has promised a reward to those who comply with these regulations!

One courageous young man initiated the movement. He called at our *Colegio* one evening to apprise the Madres of his decision to have his marriage blessed at a nuptial Mass. Would the Madres sing appropriate hymns? We could hardly refuse to heed the request of one who showed such goodwill. Together with his fiancée we invited him to come to the *Colegio* for religious instruction in preparation for their great day. True to their promise, they called during the week. How scanty was their religious science baggage! They were quite sure that they had been baptized; beyond that, they were at a loss to know the answers to even the simplest questions. However, so eager were they to do the right thing, that in a very short time they were adequately prepared.

On the morning of the appointed day, they put in an early appearance. They had been to confession on the previous evening. Manguito's pastor was so deeply touched at the realization of one of his dearest wishes, that he congratulated the pair on the wonderful example they were giving and called down upon their wedded life choicest heavenly blessings. Then turning to the throng, for such an event had brought together all the pueblo inhabitants, he underlined the utmost importance of receiving the sacrament of matrimony and the beauty of the Mass set aside by Holy Mother Church for this occasion.

May we ask the help of your prayers, dear friends and benefactors, that the true Christian spirit may be resurrected in this part of the Lord's vineyard?

1. Irene TRUDELLE, St. Narcisse, P. O.

THE MARTYR OF FUTUNA



by Florence Gilmore

(Continued)

To Father Bataillon he wrote further details: "All was quiet at Poi, and we had no suspicion of what was occurring, when a messenger from the king came breathless into our valley and begged us to go and help to care for the victims of the struggle. We ran as fast as we could. The battlefield was a scene of horror. On every side there were wounded and dying men, and beside them crouched their wives covered with blood from their wounds. While we were dressing wounds King Niuliki came, supported by his wife and one of his daughters. A lance had ploughed its way across his back, from shoulder to shoulder, making a painful but not dangerous wound. He was weak and sad, and we gave him a few drops of brandy as a stimulant."

"I gave conditional baptism to two men who died when the lances were drawn from their sides. The soldiers of Singave carried with them as many of their wounded as they could," he noted in his journal; and later, writing to Father Convers, he told, "Night was coming on, and Brother and I had done what we could. Overcome with grief and weariness we sat on the sand at the foot of a cocoanut tree. I could still hear the wailing of those whose relatives had fallen, and I myself could only moan, praying to God for these people who have become my people, and whose salvation is entrusted to me. Oh, how long the tropical nights seem in times of sorrow! For a little while we slept the sleep of utter exhaustion, but were awakened by the noise made by our islanders, who began to carry the bodies of the dead to an adjoining valley. All were buried there, except King Vanae, whose wife had taken him elsewhere, and the man *who had a god*. The victors took him to one of their own valleys. We cared for the poor Englishman, burying him where he fell. May God have mercy on his soul!"

During the next sad days Father Chanel was untiring in his visits to the wounded. Following his advice, Sam, his wife, and the young chief of Rotoma left the island

to save their lives. Sam went to Wallis where he placed himself under instruction and became a fervent Christian. He never forgot Father Chanel and wept for three days when he learned of his death.

For the peace of the island it was necessary to oblige the remnant of the defeated army to evacuate a fortress in which it had hidden. King Niuliki's men made no secret of their intention of putting the greater number of the men to death, so it was not easy to induce them to surrender. Father Chanel implored the king to forbid the massacre, until at last Niuliki assured him that the lives of all would be spared; and he kept his word. As soon as his wound permitted, His Majesty went to Singave, accompanied by the more influential of his chiefs. Father Chanel was of the party, and he exhorted the conquered people to be submissive that they might escape the evils certain to follow upon the king's anger. Little by little they did agree to all that Niuliki demanded and before the end of the month the two parties were completely reconciled. A feast, followed by dancing, sealed the friendship of conquerors and conquered. Father Chanel was overjoyed. He hoped that thanks to perfect peace, God's work would meet with no great obstacle, and resolved to redouble his efforts and renew his zeal.

To Father Bataillon he sent a detailed account of the war which had scourged his island and added words of encouragement in the difficulties then besetting the mission of Wallis: "It is quite possible that the persecution of your king has an effect contrary to that which he intends. While he acts as he is doing, at least religion is much talked of in Wallis, and those who talk about it, examine into it; and the examination will have happy results, be certain of that. I congratulate you on having confessors among your catechumens. Of course you have told them that they are not the first to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. You may say to Vaimotuku that I should love to cover with kisses every spot on his body bruised by order of Lavelua. God grant he will persevere, that in heaven the blows he suffered may be his glory! I know that the Lord is rich in mercy, and can, in spite of many obstacles, use this young chief for the spread of the Faith."

A canoe from Tonga had been driven by contrary winds to the shores of Wallis, and the natives thus cast into Father Bataillon's arms proved very docile to his teaching. Father Chanel had seen them during his visit to Wallis and was delighted when he learned that their chief had been baptized. "The news of the conversion of Tupuneiafu moved me to tears," he wrote in a letter of congratulation to Father Bataillon. "May God deign to strengthen his faith! What good will come of his example! I consider the care you have lavished on this good chief as given to a whole mission. Do you remember that we said, when I was with you, that Tupuneiafu lacked nothing except the Christian faith? If his age, or his infirmities, or to be more exact, if the will of Almighty God does not permit him to open the door of Tonga and the whole archipelago to missionaries of the true faith, I am confident his children will inherit his good qualities, and that sooner or later some of us will be able, with their help, to free his country from heresy, which can never make it truly happy." This hope was realized. Father Chevron, named to establish the mission of Tonga, took home the little colony which had settled in Wallis and found in it the support and consolation he needed in face of innumerable difficulties.

During his months of absorbing work in Futuna Father Chanel had not forgotten his dear boys at Belley, and shortly after the tragic little war he wrote them a tender, fatherly letter. "My very dear friends," he began, "I thank God for having placed you, in preference to so many others, in a house where the Blessed Virgin is loved, and one which is as dear to me as my own father's cottage.

"How my poor savages would envy you if they knew of the loving care that surrounds you! Twenty-one months have passed since I came among them. The difficulties of their language have interfered with their happiness and mine. I am deeply touched whenever I enter a village, for a number of little savages are certain to clap their hands and cry, 'Pietro ka haron!' (Peter is coming.) All of them love France and long to go there. They want French names. Some day I shall give them yours which I was glad to find at the end of your nice letter.

"You must not grieve, boys, for the missionaries whom you saw set forth for Oceania. The only regret I will allow you is that there were so few of us. We are too late for the salvation of many souls. How often I have had the sorrow of seeing adults die without being able to teach them the truths necessary for salvation! It is easier when there is question of little children in danger of death; baptism suffices for them, and I have had the joy of opening heaven to a good many. A few grown people have also been baptized before death, but only after I had instructed them in the principal mysteries of our holy religion. The total number is now only thirty; it would be greater if some had not died before I knew of their illness.

"I congratulate you, dear boys, on having chosen the Blessed Virgin for your mother. Be prouder of this title of nobility than of any other. Never force so good and tender a mother to disown you. Your good professors teach you, day by day, how to be her faithful children. As a proof of my love for you and my ardent desire for your good, all during the month of August I kept the letter signed with your names on the altar where I have the happiness of saying Mass, and close to a picture of our Blessed Mother. We will have good news to send you, if you continue to pray for us.

"I beg God to pour His richest blessings upon you and all who are destined to swell your numbers. Try, by your docility and good will, to repay the tender care of your masters. I embrace you lovingly in the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

One of your elder brothers,

PETER CHANEL,

Pro-vicar Apostolic."

Father Chanel was never weary asking for prayers. On them he relied for the success of his apostolate. To Father Séon he wrote, "Prayer alone can give life to our ministry among the savages. Without its help all our efforts will be fruitless. May the fervent souls who are interested in the success of our feeble efforts plead more incessantly with the Master of all hearts!" This is the refrain of all his letters. Nor were so many prayers said in vain. The Futunians began to soften in their attitude towards the Faith. To Father Bataillon he was able to send word, "On the whole the natives seem to be better disposed than at first. Longoasi is really zealous. The young girls know some hymns and a little catechism." In his journal he noted, on September tenth, "A few young men came to me this evening to talk about religion;"

and two days later, "Some old men, seeing my Crucifix, asked questions which gave me an opportunity to explain very simply the plan of Redemption; and this evening I was stopped by several young men who begged me to repeat for them a hymn which they had heard in Sam's house. The interest they are beginning to manifest is surely a good sign."

The truth was that the natives loved Father Chanel. This made it easier for him to baptize children in danger of death. Under the date September eighteenth his journal has this entry, "I have just been to see some sick children. I baptized one, a son of Musumusu, to whom I gave the name, Joseph of Cupertino." Later, the king himself allowed him to baptize one of his sons. But, unfortunately, there were some who set themselves in opposition to him and his teaching. After Father Chanel's martyrdom, Musulamu testified that "The Missionary had come to him to tell him of the one true God, to teach him the Catholic religion and impress upon him the uselessness of the life he was leading. 'He besought me to permit him to baptize my son. I refused, because I was foolish and stubborn and did not understand the meaning of the rite.'"

Nor were such cases rare, as the journal proves, and Brother Mary Nizier testified, adding, "When the sick insulted him and refused to listen to his instruction, he nearly always sent me to see them, saying, 'Perhaps they will have less aversion for you.'" Sometimes it happened that Brother succeeded where he had failed. The relatives of a little girl, who had been ill for a long time, would not allow Father Chanel to baptize her. As she was in no immediate danger he was not insistent. One day, when he was away, a native told Brother Mary Nizier that the child had grown worse, and, as he afterward told, "Armed with a vial of water I went to the house. I was appalled to find it crowded with a few men and many women, for I feared that they would put obstacles in the way of the good work I had gone there to do. Lest I should arouse suspicion, I said nothing about religion; if I had, my every movement would have been closely watched. Providence came to my assistance: the relatives of the child were unwilling that she should be baptized — but her mother asked me to sit beside her! How my heart throbbed with joy!" Profiting by a favorable moment, he administered baptism. Writing to a friend to exult over his happiness, he said, "You will rejoice with me when I tell you that I have baptized, not only this little girl, but five other persons, two adults and three children, during the time I have been in Futuna with Father Chanel. They are all dead, so you see I have six intercessors in heaven!"

(to be continued)

Harry Enfros, a Jewish iceman, has helped to bring 67 Catholics back into the Church and aided more than 30 Protestants to renew the practice of their religion. It all started, says the U. S. Register, when a customer sponsored Harry when he joined Alcoholics Anonymous 35 months ago and persuaded him to volunteer as an aide in St. Vincent's Hospital. After working at the hospital for a while, Harry decided to go to Midnight Mass and has been going to Mass ever since. Later he adopted the practice of going to the Rosary in the hospital chapel every evening. Once Harry spoke of the Mass and Rosary at an AA meeting, and a fallen-away Catholic spoke to him of his desire to return to the Church. Since then Harry, who says he "had never done any good for anybody" has become a real apostle. Harry himself is not a convert yet, but, he says, "I'm on my way."

Postmarked

Morondava

Dear friends of the Missions,

Will you recognize me, I wonder, even though my face has lately taken on a fashionable Malagasy tan? How far apart we now live! To me Madagascar seems to be the roof of the world.

Even if we wanted to, it would be impossible for us ever to forget you, for our miniature chapel has been almost entirely furnished thanks to your generosity. The Eucharistic Guest whose Heart is so genuinely human must think gratefully of His Canadian mission helpers who have prepared for Him a pavilion of love in this country where, as yet, He is so little known and worshipped.

Now, how about taking a stroll through the mysterious isle named Madagascar? Of course I cannot tell you about every part and every tribe of this island since I know only the spot called Morondava. On our western coast lives the Sakalava tribe. It seems that this particular group has had special cause to hold all foreigners under suspicion as it has too often suffered maltreatment and indignities at their hands. I cannot vouch for the veracity of this statement but I can assure you that we Sisters have met with the most sympathetic of welcomes.

Evidently, the Malagasy believe in the old truism that honesty is the best policy; even the children are taught the respect of other people's property. To be truthful, mention must be made of cattle thieves but in these parts, stealing a head of cattle amounts to a badge of bravery. These robber-specialists are imprisoned for a while then paroled and employed as drawers of water for Europeans living around here. Three of these gentlemen of the highway have been appointed by the Mayor as our own particular water carriers and guardians of a piece of land three kilometers away where we must go to do our laundry. It may appear strange to have robbers as protectors but no longer do I feel the need of slipping bolts and bars to sleep securely. In Morondava, doors are very lightly barred with string when they are barred at all.

Mostly consisting of white sand, the soil around here is not very productive, and fertilizers are practically unobtainable. There are many fruit-bearing trees such as bananas, coconuts, mangos, papaya, but no vegetables can be



coaxed into growing because during the hot season, they get scorched and during the cool there is never any rain. It is easy to understand why poverty should hold sway in such a country. The natives however seem to be quite contented as long as they can get rice and peas from the Cape.

If you decide on taking a trip to Morondava, make up your mind beforehand to the scarcity of passable routes linking the different cities. To reach the capital, Tananarivo, (some seven hundred kilometers away) it takes us three days of travel in fine weather and one whole month during the hot rainy season. Some time ago, waves of Mozambique Channel whipped up by a furious cyclone flooded our back yard. This mishap at least brought a change to the monotony of our daily life.

Paved routes are not the only things the Malagasy must do without. Educational establishments are too poor to pay professors in sufficient numbers; consequently it often happens that one teacher has to manage as many as one hundred and fifty or two hundred pupils. Our school is privileged in not having over seventy-five pupils per class room.

Malagasy women are modest and gentle. They wear as national costume the lamba, a piece of cotton or of silk which they gracefully drape about their shoulders. Special care is given to hair and feet. Raven wooly locks are carefully combed with coco oil, then patiently braided into about twenty fine braids which are finally arranged in two heavy plaits. The result is quite elegant but woe to the pillow slips!

When a Malagasy swain and maid decide to unite their destinies, the first thing they examine is the size of their feet. We also were appreciated, upon our arrival, according to the length and width of our nether members.

Dear friends of the missions, come to Morondava for your holidays. Perhaps you will find that our distant mission is a far cry from a fashionable resort but at least you will thank God for the fertile beautiful land where you were privileged to be born. You will appreciate it more after having seen the poverty of other countries.

You are always prayerfully remembered by those who have benefited by your generosity to the missions. May Our Lady reward you a hundred-fold. The fact that you have no means of seeing for yourselves the good wrought by your charities only adds to your merits.

Yours gratefully,

SR. ST. ADELAIDE(1), M.I.C.

1. Adelaide Tremblay, St. Cyprien de Temiscouata, P. Q.



Sharing Burdens

SR. ST. ROBERT(1), M.I.C.

Cefina and Raymonde are two five-year-old Haitian girlies who besides being first cousins are the fastest of friends. Every morning I watch them trudging to school barefooted over bumpy, winding roads, a woven palm hat balanced on their black tresses.

Raymonde who is a lover of beauty with a far-away look in her dreamy eyes, likes to loiter by the roadside picking up bunches of wild flowers. Cefina, stolid and practical, carries the basket holding the school books and a precious piece of cassava for lunch. While waiting for classes to open, the pair enjoy a quiet game of dibs under the tall almond tree at the further end of the school yard.

One particularly bright May morning, however, the two friends came in a whole hour late. Had they played truant among the wild rose hedges? Or perhaps Cefina had let her *cabri* (goat) get too playfull and been obliged to run after her? Or again, the two had probably dawdled too long by the brook. They usually enjoy wading through its cooling waters after their walk down the stony paths zigzagging the mornes.

No, no, Cefina tearfully shook her head . . . Nothing of the kind could have induced them to be late at their dearly beloved classes. While I wiped away the tears and the sweat that glistened over her face, I tried to coax the story out of them. Raymonde hardly spoke nor did she whimper but there was a silent reproach in the depths of her brown eyes. Raymonde keeps her sorrows to herself bravely trying to hide them away from prying glances in the depths of her heart, but she feels them none the less keenly. At last, with Cefina's tearful explanations I pieced this morning tragedy together.

As usual, the two friends had sauntered out very early from their thatch-roofed homes in the distant hills. Raymonde's mamma had balanced on her darling's head a small basketful of charcoal destined to cook the vegetables

1. Marguerite Hétu, St. Sulpice, P. Q.

she had secured at the market and left in the care of a friend who lived in the village below. The charcoal was to be used for the cooking of this rare treat. The cousins set out gaily but alas, the path leading down the hill was steep and slippery; down tumbled the pieces of charcoal from their precarious perch. Fat little black hands carefully picked up the precious pieces of fuel replacing them in the basket. But how could the short arms replace the burden on Raymonde's head as skilfully as mamma had done? Finally the basket was hoisted up in place and the somewhat forlorn twosome continued on their way. But Raymonde's head began to droop and her steps to lag. Kind-hearted Cefina relieved her of the too heavy load. How dearly they were to pay for their delicious hot meal of vegetables at luncheon! When they finally reached the *caille* of the kind friend who had volunteered to do their cooking, the sweat was running down their tired limbs. They paused to rest only for a few moments then hurried on to school.

Her story told, Cefina hung her head uncertain whether I would scold or praise but Raymonde looked trustingly into my eyes; all signs of reproach had by now vanished from hers. She had guessed the pity that stirred my heart depths as I listened to their touching little drama. So few and scanty are the comforts these children enjoy! It is not every day that they can boast of having eaten their fill at least at one meal. And yet, they are so cheerful, so pathetically thankful for the least little treat offered them.

Dear Canadian children, shall you feel surprised if I tell you that my heart is sore when I compare their lot to yours? O do not forget to thank God for your school lunches so appetizing that my poor Haitian children might mistake them for fairy food. Thank Him for your comfortable beds and your neat clothes. My Haitian darlings have only a thin mat to sleep on at night and threadbare clothes to wear to school. Say at least a fervent prayer for them before you tumble into your downy beds and sail off for the Land of Nod.



Epochal Distraction

Dr. Carlos Finlay, Cuban scientist, lived from 1833 to 1915. The epochal idea that the germ of yellow fever is carried by mosquitoes came to him as a distraction while praying.

The eminent scientist arrived home late one night. Extremely tired, he was about to go to sleep when he remembered that he had not yet recited the Rosary which he never omitted saying every day, no matter how busy he was. Thus he began to pray devoutly each bead, while from time to time, the buzzing of mosquitoes around him distracted him from his devotions.

Suddenly, as though enlightened by the Most Holy Mother whom he was invoking at that moment, he conceived the theory that was to immortalize his name; the mosquito as the carrying agent of yellow fever.

Our Beloved Dead



Reverend Brother Elie Justin, MARISTS, POUGHKEPSIE, N.Y., U.S.A.; Mr. Pierre Rainville, BEAUPORT EAST, father of our Sr. St. Lazarus; Mr. William Maltais, CHICOUTIMI, father of our Sr. Margaret of the Angels; Mr. Clovis Ouellet, JONQUIERE, father of our Sr. St. Priscillia; Mr. Joseph M. Turgeon, ST. ANSELM, father of our Sr. Marie Helen; Mrs. A. Bergeron, ST. SOPHIE OF MEGANTIC, mother of our Sr. St. Athanase; Mr. Germain Parrot, MONTREAL, father of our Sr. St. Monica; Mrs. J. B. Bernier, CHARNY, sister of our Sr. Marie Mediatrix; Mrs. P. Sedillot, St. Pierre de la Prairie, grandmother of our Sr. Celine of Jesus; Mr. Azarie Desourdy, ST. SEBASTIEN OF IBERVILLE, grandfather of our Sr. St. Serge; Miss Suzanne Lavallee, MONTREAL, sister of our Sr. Marie Lydia; Miss Queenie Downes, MONTREAL; Mr. Peter Morrill, Mrs. Ella J. Hart, SOUTH BREWER, ME., U.S.A.; Mrs. Mary J. McDonald, UNION CITY, N.Y., U.S.A.; Mrs. Pierre Blais, Mr. Achille Gosselin, ST. SOPHIE OF MEGANTIC; Mrs. Vve G. Thibault, Mrs. Georges Gadbois, Mrs. J. A. Fabien, Mr. L. J. Grace, Mrs. Louis Beaulieu, Mrs. Joseph Giroux, Miss Anna Laporte, Mr. L. J. Savard, Mr. A. Brunelle, Mrs. Armand Parent, Mrs. Donat Brabant, Mrs. R. Riendeau, Mr. Rodolphe Lepine, Mr. Pierre Parent, Mrs. Omer Matte, Mr. Maurice Favreau, Mrs. A. Forget, Mr. Conrad Beaudry, Miss Louise Deneault, Miss M. Lacharite, Mrs. Paul Carmel, Mr. Romeo Lemelin, Mrs. X. Bourassa,

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The more those in paganism see men showing love for one another, the sooner will they be won to Christ.

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