

THE PRECURSOR

May — June 1969 Montreal — Vol. XXVIII — no 9

Rico's first love.



MISSIONARY INTENTION FOR MAY:

That in mission countries the collaboration of lay missionaries be developed in a more efficacious manner.

Hear our prayer, O Lord.

MISSIONARY INTENTION FOR JUNE:

That in all Asian countries freedom of religion be restored.

Hear our prayer, O Lord.

THE PRECURSOR

No 9 — May — June 1969 — Vol. XXVIII

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DIRECTION

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NIHIL OBSTAT:

Reverend A. Cossette, P.M.E.
January 24, 1969

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SERVING THE MYSTERY

Nothing can better express the life of Mary than these words, "She served the mystery of Redemption".

There are lives which, at first glance, appear to possess marvelous unity, lives expressly destined for such and such an achievement, lives that never deviate from their goal. Others, on the contrary, grope in uncertainty. After having attempted one thing, they opt for another. Like fallen leaves in autumn, they flit aimlessly here and there. They momentarily hang on to a ragged branch, then flutter down to earth, only to be caught up again by a fitful breeze and wedged between rocks where they finally wither and die.

Mary has but ONE reason for being.

Doubtless, we might say that, in its fitful capers, the fallen leaf follows its destiny. Nonetheless, with respect to God, such an indifferent thing as a fallen leaf cannot be compared with human liberty.

Divine Providence presides over all things in an extremely diversified manner. Man is the object of God's particular solicitude. "You govern us with great lenience" (Ws 12-18). But, no creature on earth has ever been showered with as many favours as Mary has been. Her exceptional vocation as Mother of the Son of God makes of her, as the Council asserts, "the predestined Mother" (Lumen Gentium, No 56). Bound, moreover, through the divine will to the work of her Son, she exists for this alone.

The conciliar text emphasizes the incomparable dimension of her collaboration: "Embracing God's saving will with a FULL HEART and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself TOTALLY as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and word of her Son. In subordination to him, by the grace of almighty God she served THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION" (Ibid).

OF REDEMPTION

Anything we may add can merely be an explanation of the Council's assertion. For Mary, all is resumed in this fundamental attitude, just as Christ Himself is above all Saviour.

The Council reminds us that the entire Church is missionary, even if only the elite of its sons and daughters is actually enrolled in the ranks of missionary units.

Why do so many people refuse to live up to this characteristic of their Christian life? Perhaps because, to a large extent, they have not grasped its implications or again because they think they have done their share by a yearly donation to the mission cause.

After the example of Mary, we must all serve the mystery of redemption continued in time through the missionary activity of the Church. By reminding the laity that they can participate in the mission of the Church, the Council manifests its relative easiness. The following passage is one of the most enlightening which emanated from the Council on the significance of the word APOSTOLATE, so widely used but so little understood: "For this the Church was founded: that by spreading the kingdom of Christ everywhere for the glory of God the Father, she might bring all men to share in Christ's saving redemption... All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate" (The Layman's Call to Apostolate).

All can be missionaries, little children as well as aged people. ALL ACTIVITY: work, prayer, suffering, even helplessness, can become creative through the offering we make of it in a missionary intention.

Thereby we can, after the example of Mary, SERVE THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION.

Henri M.Guidon, S.M.M.

A missionary spirituality

In 1953, Father Salaverri resumed as follows the meaning of missionary spirituality: "Although it is not specifically different from any other Christian spirituality, missionary spirituality is a direction, a kind of interior life, a form of union with Christ in harmony with the missionary ideal. This ideal is a universalistic aspiration tending to pour out, throughout the world, the boundless treasures of redemptive grace. It also consists in an ardent desire to unite to Christ and to hem within the Fold of the Church the whole of regenerated humanity."

Every Christian spirituality must possess a Catholic resonance and manifest the desire to spread the Gospel throughout the world. Its chief concern is to assemble the whole of humanity with all its riches and values in Christ, the Head, in the unity of His Spirit. This direction necessary for it corresponds to the general missionary vocation, common to the whole Church. However, we are concerned here with the proper spirituality of the missionary, as mentioned in No 24 of the Decree *Ad Gentes*. This latter spirituality corresponds to the characteristics of the missionary's vocation as defined in the Conciliar texts. Consequently, close union with God must be allied in the missionary, to promptness in responding to the call of the Hierarchy to go and preach the Gospel and to implant the Church. The missionary must stand ready to leave the Christian milieu of his own homeland in order to go to non-Christian countries to preach as an envoy of the Church.

Of itself, this spirituality consists in the right motivation which should inspire the missionary. Evidently, the spiritual exigencies outlined in No 24 leave no opening for dreams of adventure or of conquest. Nonetheless, it also rectifies the opinion of those who would put a damper on apostolic zeal or preaching for fear of indiscreet proselytism, and who emphasize the necessity of witnessing and of humble service. The Council here maintains the equilibrium of truth.

Constant self-denial is called for: the missionary renounces the ties of flesh and blood in order to surrender himself entirely to Christ and to his universalistic concerns; he must have



(Part II)

THE MISSIONARY

the strength and the courage to preach the mystery of Christ and to carry his Cross; he must possess patience, humility, and charity in order to manifest the splendours of the Gospel to peoples whose mentality and culture differ vastly from his own. This he will achieve rather by the example of his life than by his words. He will avoid putting on airs. Finally, his obedience will be particularly strong and loyal for it is the "characteristic virtue of the disciples of Christ". Obedience alone will enable him to adapt himself to act in the name of Christ, as envoy of the Church.

It is clear that such an ideal can hardly be embraced without the "inspiration of the Holy Spirit". The strength and consistency of the missionary vocation will be safeguarded only insofar as the soul of the missionary will find nourishment in the great Christian dogmas considered in their fundamentally universalistic aspects. The loving plan of God the Father to serve all men and to make them one in Christ Jesus; the universal redemption of Christ; the universal destiny of the Church, Mystical Body of Christ, into which all are to be incorporated... These are so many sources which will serve to replenish and inspire the thoughts and the energy of the missionary. In Chapter I of the Decree which presents a harmonious synthesis of the fundamental dogmas, the missionary will find the justification of his life and of his apostolate.

A certain number of Council Fathers expressed the wish that the expression "for life" be deleted because, they said, it limited the missionary vocation to those alone who dedicate themselves to the missions for life. To this the Commission replied, "The words *ad vitam* signify a generous disposition of the soul; the missionary must have the intention of persevering in his vocation and

in his mission". It does not necessarily follow that he must physically spend all his life in mission territory.

Lifelong commitment

The expression must be maintained for two reasons. First, because it marks the religious fidelity that man is bound to manifest towards God who calls him. Secondly, because missionary activity requires a special preparation lasting several years, as well as an adaptation (linguistic, cultural, etc.) which also takes much time.

This is the reason why during the sessions which immediately preceded the final vote for the Decree, the Commission for the Missions justified its position as follows: « Although the work of those who go to the missions on a temporary basis is of real importance, there exists objectively a great difference between a temporary and a total and definitive engagement. So much so that we can apply to it what was said of the religious consecration in

VOCATION

Mgr J. Lecuona, M.E.B.

The missionary must identify himself with peoples of divergent mentality and culture.





Courageous perseverance in the service of the mission is one of the chief exigencies of the missionary vocation.

the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*: "The engagement leading to missionary activity will be all the more perfect that it implies firmer and more stable bonds". On the other hand, the good of the Church also requires that the necessity and the value of a perpetual engagement be emphasized. As a matter of fact, missionary work ordinarily calls for a lengthy preparation, for a courageous adaptation fostered by perseverance and energy. This exigency of remaining faithful for life to the missionary vocation does not contradict what has been said elsewhere of temporary assistance to the missions. In this passage, the missionary ideal is considered as it is found in the Scriptures and in accordance to the missionary activities. Finally, the Commission may accept modifications of texts which improve the expression of ideas, but not those which alter the ideas approved by the majority in the General Congregation. Consequently, the text is to be maintained as it stands.

A certain remark of Saint Thomas Aquinas clears up this point, "It is necessary to entrust to each person distinctive tasks so that all things may be done in order and without confusion". In this passage, Saint Thomas shows how diversity of the states of life and professions is necessary if the Church is to accomplish the work, that is hers. What refers to a person's duty of state alone constitutes his state of life, the concept of a state of life, being correlative with liberty or slavery, whether in the spiritual or civil order.

Any activity of this sort usually absorbs an entire life. Normally, it requires a total and definitive dedication to the apostolic life to which one has been called. A perpetual engagement of this kind will meet with great resistance on the part of the youths of our times, so deeply attached to their liberty and independence. In this state of mind they tend to reject definitive options as often as they can, being under the delusion that everything can be done, thanks to a series of temporary engagement.

Far from us to depreciate temporary activities in favour of the missions and to consider them ineffectual or fruitless. On the contrary, such collaboration provides a useful and meritorious contribution. The Council recommends it, just as Pope Pius XI did in his encyclical *Fidei Donum*. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that missionary work cannot be carried out by temporary collaboration alone. We must not delude ourselves into believing that we have answered, as entirely as we should, the call of the Lord by working during only a few years in the mission field afar, when in reality His grace was urging us to dedicate our whole life in the service of a cause which is so noble but which progresses so slowly.

The Council insists on generous disposition of the heart as a requisite for a fruitful missionary apostolate. It goes on to say that the missionary candidate must be ready to accept apostolic tasks and to remain faithful to his vocation his whole life through. Besides, the Council also requires similar dispositions of the diocesan priest who has dedicated himself to the service of a particular Church, in case his Bishop authorizes him to leave for the missions or desires him to be sent thither. The gift of the Spirit which priests receive at their ordination prepares them not merely in view of a certain limited mission but in view of an extensive and universal apostolate. Therefore, the priests of dioceses where vocations abound must willingly accept, with the approbation of their bishop, to exercise their ministry in regions where priests are too few to cope with local needs.

(to be continued)

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TEXT:

SR E. VANCHESTEIN, M.I.C.

PHOTO:

SR G. VILLEMURE, M.I.C.

As gracious and as colourful as the island on which they live are the women of Haiti. Along with their men folk they have written more than one glorious page of the nation's history.



WOMEN OF HAITI

The sharp wit of Madame Pageot, for instance, was at one time instrumental in saving the life of the national hero, Dessalines. General Andrieux, in command of French troops, had made up his mind to capture the Haitian leader. He therefore invited himself to dinner at the pastor's residence where Dessalines was at that time staying. But

Madame Pageot, the pastor's housekeeper, outwitted the perfidious plan by warning Dessalines and favouring his flight from the premises.

Another heroine was Marie-Jeanne, a young and pretty mulatto, native of Port-au-Prince. She courageously accompanied Lamartinière while he

held the fort of Crête-à-Pierrot, against an army of over 12,000 men. History relates that she shouldered a gun as expertly as any man, upheld the courage and enthusiasm of the defenders, cared for the wounded, helped to load cannons. In short, she was always in the front rank, a stimulus and an example to all.

Among the greatest champions of Haitian independence was Sanite Bélair, a stalwart woman, high-spirited, brave to a fault, violent and overbearing. As a young emancipated slave she had become the wife of General Charles Bélair, Toussaint's brilliant aide-de-camp. Before joining in the struggle for Haitian independence, the General had fought at Savannah for the independence of the United States. Learning that Toussaint had been betrayed and deported, Sanite urged her husband to keep up the fight for complete emancipation. In soldier's garb she followed him in his campaigns, was present at meetings, caught the French in an ambush, and was finally captured by the enemy. Upon hearing of her plight, her desperate husband gave himself up to General Leclerc in the hope of securing her liberation or of sharing her fate. He was condemned to be shot, and Sanite to be beheaded. Forced to be present at her husband's execution she stood proudly to the end, then calmly surrendered to her fate, tearless and unbending to the bitter end.

At Archahaie, May 18, 1803, when Dessalines created the national flag, Catherine Flon sewed up the blue and the red of the French flag from which the white had been torn. Blue symbolized the blacks, red the mulattos.

Marie Claire Heureuse Bonheur hid the naturalist Descourtilz pursued by Dessalines, her husband. At the height of her glory, Marie Claire remained modest and unassuming. Known and admired for her charity, she was loved by all who came into contact with her. She had great influence upon her husband and stood up to him whenever there was a question of saving some unfortunates from falling victims to his fury. After Dessalines' assassination, she devoted the rest of her life caring for destitute young girls. She died in extreme old age, surrounded by the veneration of her people.

Hand in hand with their men, Haitian women have thus forged their noble nation, sharing in their hardships, stimulating their efforts, upholding their courage. Today, they continue to build

up Haiti by their energy, their endurance, the pursuit of high ideals. In some cases, they are also the guardians of spirit worship and of superstitious rites.

Spirits play an important role in the life of Haitian country folk. Expectant mothers often wear charms in order to ward off the evil eye from their unborn child. Prior to birth, sacrifices are offered to the manes of ancestors. To bear children is the Haitian woman's fondest dream. Children are wanted and loved. So as to preserve them from mishaps or danger, mothers carefully observe traditional prescriptions, consulting *bocors* or witch doctors, more especially in the case of "supernatural" illness, i.e., illness caused by the use of magic.

A woman who after a year of wedlock has not yet had a child is sure to worry. She will then consult a doctor or a *bocor* according to her social standing. Novenas will be made to patron saints so as to obtain a child through their intercession. As soon as a woman finds herself pregnant, she spends the greater part of her time preparing for the baby's coming. This is true more particularly among women of the middle class. When labour sets in, not only the doctor is called but also the mother, mother-in-law, aunts, neighbours... The patient is surrounded with tender care and delicate attentions. She receives numerous gifts, and all her parents, friends, and acquaintances call to congratulate her. Baby also is the focus of attention. Everybody wants to help with the newborn's toilet. In well-to-do families, a nurse is attached to the child's exclusive service. When this is not feasible, a little maid servant is entrusted with the task of amusing it and taking it out for airings under Mamma's vigilant eye.

As a rule, Haitian mammas tend to overfeed their children. A fat child is their glory! Little ones are fondly dolled up, especially the girls. Their ears are pierced to allow for earrings, and pretty ribbons adorn their dark hair. Babies are the family centre of attraction.

Towards five or six, girls and boys are sent to school. Girls tend to be more studious. It is something of an ordeal for these children who until then spoke only Haitian Creole to transfer to the French language taught everywhere. But they are eager to learn and they enjoy reading out loud which favours their French diction. Games are played with vim and vigour.



Haitian women are very fond of their children.



**THE HAITIAN
WOMAN
AT WORK**



**HAITIAN
WOMAN'S
SENSITIVITY
IS EXQUISITE**





Are not Haitian souls, so widely open to love and so strong in faith, ideal seeding plots wherein to cast the seed of truth?

How the Haitians, big and little, love to dance and sing! Rhythm is in their blood. They know by rote hundreds of songs of all kinds. On Saturdays, the majority of Haitian girls practise the household arts of washing and ironing. They are early taught to sew and mend and keep house. Generally speaking, they are a merry lot, fond of social intercourse. Haitian mammas train their daughters in respect for the aged.

Girls belonging to lower middle class families are sent to the market when still very young to sell produce or hold a booth in their mother's place. They show an uncommon fund of resourcefulness and can strike a bargain with the most astute. Haitian women are reserved and at times enigmatic, but they possess undeniable charm. Their simple gracious manners put people at ease.

The schoolgirls are as mischievous as their peers everywhere. One of my pupils one day erased the three from the report ranking her as 32nd of her class in order not to draw maternal displeasure upon herself. Back in the schoolroom, she calmly restored the 3 before handing in the signed report.

Haitian girl students are ambitious. Eager to pursue their studies, a great number enroll in the *lycées* high schools, teaching colleges, schools of nursing. Mothers are always ready to make

sacrifices in order to ensure thorough schooling for their children. A few privileged students even manage to be sent abroad to attend higher educational institutions. As a rule, the girls obtain better results than the boys. Their studious habits, however, do not prevent them from enjoying life; they are fond of music, dancing, movies, dating.

Their schooling over, they are expected to help their family, a sacred duty in Haiti. Even cousins are at times included in the family circle. It may happen that a young girl works merely with a view to earning a remunerative salary and has no real interest in her profession.

Girls of thirteen or fourteen, even younger, may have steady admirers. The mothers themselves encourage their daughters to dress in such a way as to enhance their charms and to please the young man who may eventually be their life partner. But, things are allowed to become serious only when the girls are seventeen or eighteen. As long as the father of the young man has not presented his request to the young girl's family, no real engagement exists and relations may be easily broken off.

The affianced young girl remains under strict surveillance; she is never allowed to go out alone with her fiancé. Her mother will always be



present whenever the young man calls, and will often invite him to the family meals. According to custom, the young man has the initiative in marriage proposals. The contrary sometimes takes place, for the young girl has many an indirect means of manifesting her preference to the young man of her choice.

The duration of engagements depends on the financial situation of respective families. For his part, the fiancé must provide house furnishings, the fiancée contributing only her personal trousseau. However, the family of the latter must bear the cost of the wedding reception.

There are two wedding ceremonies, one civil, the other religious. For the young girl, marriage is a very serious step to be taken only after adequate and prolonged preparation. On the mother devolves the duty of instructing her daughter in the duties and obligations she is about to assume. Many Haitian girls, sheltered since their childhood, are ignorant regarding sexual matters.

Haitian woman is capable of deep love. Her sensitivity is exquisite, colouring all familial and social aspects of life. She longs to love and to be loved, to spend herself for the beloved. For her husband, her family, she is ready to give her very life.

As a positive value, this sensitivity may lead to superior inclinations; such as love of good, of beauty, and above all love of God. Is not sentiment the driving force of activity? Nothing is done if there is no love.

The young Haitian woman brings to her married partner treasures of kindness, sociability, mutual help, which make for happiness. While attending to her duties as wife and mother, she knows how to contribute in social works. She may even excel in political, economic, and cultural fields.

In all these different sectors, the Haitian woman is admired for her perfect distinction, her poise, her competence, and her natural self-respect. She can measure up to any task. A woman was the instigator of the Feminine League which won franchise for the women of Haiti. This League now spreads its action to all social classes and has been affiliated to the International Alliance of Women.

It has been said that the mystique of Haitian women consists in linking creatures and things in their ambient world with supernatural causes. This psychological attitude may be traced in all events and at all levels. As the secrets of nature mysteriously influence their emotivity, they invariably turn to the Creator to confide in Him. *Bon Dié bon!* God is good! is a favourite saying of theirs. Their prayers are not formal, but spring from the innermost depths of their hearts. It is not surprising that, at times and in certain circumstances, they easily revert to age-old superstitions.

Gaston Bouthol pertinently remarks, "In spite of scientific progress, myths will always play an important role in social psychology. Man realizes how powerless he sometimes is... Reason is not a starting point but a goal."

Are not Haitian souls so widely open to love and so strong in faith ideal seeding plots wherein to cast the seed of truth?

MYSTERY WORD

by Mr. Jean-Claude Langlois

- ◆ *By assembling the non-encircled letters (horizontally only), you will find the hidden word, after you have inserted all the words BUT ONE, written above the square. The letters which make up the hidden word are in chronological order.*
- ◆ *For greater facility, first insert the longest words.*
- ◆ *As soon as you discover a word, encircle the letters of this word in the square and cross the word out from the list above the square.*
- ◆ *The only words useful for the square are those matching in theme the hidden word.*
- ◆ *As soon as you have used up all the words BUT ONE from the list above the square, there will remain only the letters for the hidden word.*
- ◆ *Any word accompanied by the asterisk (★) is doubled in the square.*

YOU MAY DISCOVER THE HIDDEN WORD

*by encircling the letters of the words either
HORIZONTALLY, from left to right, or from right to left;
VERTICALLY, up—down, or down—up;
DIAGONALLY, from left to right, or from right to left.*

N.B. A given letter can be used for several words depending on their direction, except for the hidden word.

9 LETTERS REMAINING

MYSTERY WORD

HAÏTI

When all the words will be used to encircle the letters below, except one, the remaining letters will form the mystery word.

A	boat	cocoa	J	melon	pea	rum
aid		creole	jeep	mulatto	peasant	S
Antilles	C	F	L	mule	pita	salt
Arawak	cane	fagot	laurel	mural	pottery	sisal
ass	Caraib	G	M	N	R	sugar
B	citadel	gonave	machete	nap	orange	sun
banana	citron	H	magic	O	republic	T
bananas	clam	Haïti	maize	P	rhythm	tafia
basket	cléo	heat	mango	palm	rice	tango
beast	coco		meat		river	tourist
						V
						voodoo

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	O	T	M	H	O	Y	E	T	E	H	C	A	M	U	R
2	R	S	E	A	G	G	R	L	N	O	N	O	L	E	M
3	S	A	N	A	N	A	B	E	O	A	N	U	A	R	C
4	T	E	G	A	A	G	B	D	T	O	S	S	P	I	O
5	G	B	R	U	T	A	O	A	R	T	S	A	L	C	C
6	B	O	A	T	S	O	F	T	N	N	O	B	E	E	O
7	A	R	N	K	V	I	I	I	P	A	U	P	T	P	A
8	T	N	E	A	A	C	T	C	E	P	N	E	N	A	C
9	I	T	T	V	V	S	C	L	E	Z	L	A	F	A	R
10	P	L	E	I	I	E	A	R	J	B	I	A	R	A	C
11	A	A	L	R	L	R	C	M	E	I	G	A	S	C	N
12	E	S	U	M	U	L	A	T	T	O	W	I	M	I	U
13	P	O	M	M	E	L	E	I	T	A	L	D	I	G	S
14	T	O	C	O	C	G	A	S	K	T	A	E	M	A	G
15	E	M	H	T	Y	H	R	L	E	R	U	A	L	M	R



BY MICHEL L.

THE DRUM

HAITI

Excerpts:

"Le Tambour et Danse religieuse dans la liturgie chrétienne en Haïti."

The liturgy's "didascalia of the Church", aims chiefly at bringing to life the mystery of salvation. This is indeed its proper function. It imparts knowledge, not solely with a view to propagating Christian doctrine, but above all in order to introduce us to a living and dynamic faith. Thereby, we shall more clearly grasp the reason why liturgy directs and orientates us towards the paschal mystery, climax of the history of salvation.

Liturgy adapts itself to every moment of our Christian existence, situating us in a genuine existential attitude of prayer. Nevertheless, it urges us to take our own life in hand and to render ourselves jointly responsible with the praying community. Finally, liturgy helps us pursue a personal dialogue with the Lord in the midst of the community.

Far from being of secondary importance, the dimensions of liturgy constitute its very essence. Liturgy does not depersonalize. On the contrary, it allows each and every one to live up fully to the mystery of ecclesial communion, it anticipates eschatology, it reminds us that we are saved, both as persons and as community, through baptism.

From theological formulation, let us now pass on to practice. It appears undeniable that in Haiti, the need is felt of an adapted liturgy which would allow the people to grasp fully the meaning of words and gestures. Liturgy ought to be understandable in its structure, its rites, its language, its music. In this perspective and effort, dance and the drum to the degree in which they express authentic religious values may be called upon to integration within Christian liturgy.



MEL LAQUERRE
 DRUM
 HAITI

Mr. Laquerre, a Haitian clergyman, graduate in sociology, is at present studying theology at Montreal University, Canada.

Music in Haitian cultural life

Whoever has lived, even if only for a few days, in Haiti has not failed to note the role played by music in its cultural life. The Haitian sings at all times and in all events. He is a musician at heart. Like a string attuned, his soul vibrates to the least impression, to the tempo of daily happenings. In his book *Ainsi parle l'oncle*, Dr. Price Mars brushes the following pen-portrait of the Haitian:

Haitians love to sing. They are a people who labour, laugh, sing, and accept life as it is. From birth to death, song is woven into the very fibre of their existence. The Haitian sings when his eyes are filled with tears as well as when he is bursting with joy. He sings in the turmoil of battles, under the

thrust of bayonets, the hail of bullets, in the glory of victory, the horror of defeat. He sings of muscular prowess, of rest after labour, of unquenchable optimism, of obscure intuition which assures him that neither injustice nor suffering are eternal and that, moreover, nothing can ever be despaired of since God is good.¹

Haitian song is closely linked to the rhythm of the drum and provides expert percussion allowing the singer to perform in an efficient manner. The beat of the drum enables him not only to recapture his rhythm but also to commune in a natural way with the cosmos.

Drum beats have always set Haitian feet dancing. Weddings, patronal feasts, carnivals are highlighted by song and dance. Both play a paramount

role in voodoo rites and celebrations, being associated with the mystical activity of the *loas*. The poet Frank Fouché writes:

Ours is a land of dance and song, of dance
and song.
This is our very soul — song and dance.
We sing and dance
When joy lights a bonfire.
From our hearts rise
Song and dance
When life breaks our hearts,
When our eyes are filled with tears.

Our rhythms which originated in Africa have been more or less transformed. Haitian music is the living reflection of the depths of our psychology; it discloses our innermost sentiments. Typical Haitian music alone can penetrate into the inextricable maze of our psychology.

Indigenous musical forms can certainly be used in the service of Christian worship. They might well effect an acclimatization of liturgy which would be of real assistance to the deepening of Christianity in Haiti. Rhythm undeniably holds strong appeal for Haitians. The drum is used in order to manifest sad as well as joyful feelings; rhythm quickens all the sentiments of which a human being is capable. In voodoo rites, rhythm induces the mystic trance. Because they present reflections of Haitian sensitiveness, both drum and dance are called upon to form an integral part of Catholic liturgy in Haiti.

Use of the drum in the Bible: essay of interpretation

Before launching into this biblical inventory, we must seek to understand the role played by the drum in Israel's religious manifestations. Was the drum part of the Temple's liturgical paraphernalia? This is the question which will be treated in the following paragraphs.

The Israelites used the drum in the course of their popular manifestations or of their religious ceremonies. "In usage from ancient times and

usually handled by women, tambourines served as accompaniment to dances and festive songs."²

In the book of Genesis, it is related that Jacob having fled from his father-in-law's house, Laban pursued him in his flight. After seven days of journeying he caught up with him saying, "Why did you flee in secret, stealing away without letting me know so that I could send you on your way rejoicing, with songs and the music of tambourines and lyres?" (Gn 31:27)

For their part, the prophets tell us that the silencing of tambourines in the course of Israel's popular manifestations was a sign of sadness (Is 5:12; Is 30:32; Jr 31:4). In his apocalyptic poem, the prophet Isaiah describes the dereliction of those on whom falls the curse of Yahweh, "The merry tambourines are silent, the sound of reveling is over, the merry lyres are silent" (Is 24:8).

These texts — as well as those in Job 21:12 — manifest openly that tambourines were used during popular manifestations to sing the praises of Yahweh or again to express joy at the victory of Israel. In the psalms may be found several references to the use of tambourines during religious ceremonies. Psalm 68, a hymn of thanksgiving, evokes the glorious saga of Israel, the highlights of the history of the people of God comparing them to a triumphant procession:

...cantors marching in front, musicians behind,
and between them maidens playing tambourines (Ps 68:26).

On the occasion of the Feast of Tents, one of the greatest yearly festivals, tambourines punctuated public rejoicings:

Start the music, sound the drum, the melodious lyre and the harp (Ps 81:3).

As may be inferred from the above passages, drum and dance formed part of all festivities among the Israelites. However this may be, it was more especially after military victories that the children of Israel danced and sang to the accompaniment of tambourines or other musical instruments in thanksgiving to Yahweh. Dance and drum were also early introduced into the Temple religious ceremonies (Est 149:3, Ps 150:4).

Testimony of Fathers of the Church

During the first centuries of the Christian era, the faithful apparently held more or less severe views with respect to dancing. Such opinions are easily understandable, this species of entertainment being often of a lascivious character, as may be deduced from the performances of Greek and Roman professional dancers.

While the Fathers condemn lascivious or erotic dances, they nonetheless relate in their writings that angelic beings in heaven dance for joy, in the presence of the Lord. Saint John Chrysostom himself reminds us that God gave us our feet not that we might use them in shameful fashion but that we might one day join in angelic dances. For its part, liturgy teaches us that, in heaven, choirs of virgins surround the Bridegroom, "You who walk in the midst of lilies surrounded by choirs of virgins, O Bridegroom all radiant with glory..."

Origen asserts that Herodias' dance was the opposite of a holy dance such as that mentioned in Mt 11:17 or Luke 7:32, "We played the pipes for you and you wouldn't dance..."

It is in Saint Ambrose's writings that we find the most frequent and most succinct mentions made of religious dancing: "Physical dances in honour of the Lord are considered as proper since David

himself danced before the Ark of Covenant" (in Ps 118:7; P.L. 15, 1290 b). But how should such dances be performed? David danced before the Ark not in debauchery but in a religious attitude. Thus, his performance was not that of grotesque contorsions, but it represented the graceful and religious agility of body and soul" (in Luke 6:5, P.L. 15, 166 d-1670 a). He goes on to say, "There can be no harmony between the mysteries of Resurrection and the shameful disportment of the dance... There exists, however, a decorous dance thanks to which the soul rejoices and the body elevates itself through good works" (6, 8, 1670 cd).

Saint Ambrose considers the feasibility of spiritualizing the dance which he judges to be a noble way of worshipping God. It must, in such a case, be performed in a spirit of faith. "Christ commended David because he danced before the Ark. All that is related to religion is proper; we need not feel ashamed of anything which contributes to the worship and honour of Christ. There is no question here of the dances which accompany pleasure or lust, but of those through which agile bodies are elevated in dignified activity. Paul danced spiritually when, forgetting the past, he turned his steps to the future, reaching out to capture Christ (Ph 3:13-14). You also, when you turn your steps toward baptism are called upon to raise your hands and quicken your pace in order to rise towards eternal goods. Such a dance is the associate of faith, the companion of grace (De Poenitentia 2, 6, P.L. 16, 508 ab).



Therefore, Saint Ambrose considers religious dance as manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the person who prays: "Sound the tambourine so that the Spirit may cause to sing interiorly the instrument of your body, and that the exercise of your activity may translate the amiable graciousness of your life" (Ambrose of Milan, Treatise on Saint Luke's Gospel, 6:10, p. 231).

Saint John Chrysostom (407) mentions certain apparently Christian dances which were performed at Antioch: "You have danced a lively dance" (Ad Populorum Antiochemum hom. 19, P.G. 49, 187).

We read in Saint Augustine's works that the Priscillians sang in one of their hymns, "I want to sing; let us all dance together; I want to clasp my hands; let us all stamp our feet" (Ep. 237, P.L. 33, 1034-1036).

According to a homily preached sometime in the first part of the fourth century, on the occasion of the anniversary of Saint Polycarp's martyrdom, the faithful used to celebrate the feast of the martyr by dancing in his honour: "Today we honour the day of his triumph. It is our duty as Christians to celebrate his virtues, high and low. What shall we offer the noble martyr? Through what thanksgiving shall we show the love he bore the Lord? Let us all rejoice together and perform in his honour the customary dances (Quoted by A. Aubé, Paris 1882, p. 79).

While the Fathers severely and categorically condemned lascivious, erotic, and extravagant dances, they approved of religious dances, thanks to which the whole human body renders homage to God, dances which manifest the exultation of the soul in the Lord.

The drum in Church music

Part of the effort in the line of the adaptation or rather of the acclimatization of the Church in Haiti should bear on the development of an authentically indigenous music. Typically Haitian music, such as used in voodoo, was conceived in function of the sacred, to enable the adept to communicate with the *loa* or spirit. It creates ambiance and favours dialogue in a highly spiritualized climate.

Much remains to be done. The Christianity we have known, in spite of being tainted with a

European culture, is at once providential and a source of great difficulties. Undoubtedly, the principal of these difficulties lies in the fact that we may let our minds become clouded in such a way that we are left powerless to distinguish between what stems strictly from European sensitiveness and what is essentially Christian.

Voodooism, the popular religion of the Haitian masses, runs parallel as it were to Christianity. Its liturgy comprises a whole series of musical scales which enable the adepts to communicate with the deity. Their religious concepts are conveyed through songs.

The only means we have of really penetrating the Haitian mystique is to interpret Creole cosmogony and theogony. For the Haitian, the universe itself is sacred and God far from being a mere abstract force is a dynamic wellspring of life. Being peopled with vital forces the cosmos represents something of a sacramental nature. Life throughout the cosmos is a manifestation of the sacred, an unrivalled explanation of the divine. The gods are everywhere and nothing must be left undone in order to appease them or gain their good will. Haitians feel responsible not only with regard to human beings but also to the cosmos. In all Creole celebrations, the people communicate with cosmic rhythm through song, the beat of the drum, the movements of the dance. Through their body they feel inserted within universal rhythm.

The language of the drum is intelligible to initiates. Performers make it vibrate and pulsate through the mornes and valleys. During a voodoo celebration, the hypnotic thump of the drum regulates the ceremony. The drum moans with the mourners, whispers like the throbbing heart of lovers, exults with revellers. It speaks the language of the initiates. This instrumental language which punctuates the dance and accompanies the song can doubtless recover its rightful place within a Catholic liturgy which is of an essentially communal character.

As a rule, Haitian singing is always accompanied by the drum. In the hands of experts, this instrument can endow singing with overtones of supplication, solemnity, exultation thereby helping Christians express their religious sentiment.

Nevertheless, this sort of music needs to undergo a certain amount of purification and of decantation. The predominance of rhythm should not

lead to deviations bordering on disrespect or indecency. Moreover, they should not induce the faithful into all sorts of evasions or provoke hysteria or a state of emotional mysticism; such deviations being corrected, Haitian sacred music deserves to be promoted. Use of the drum in church celebrations will naturally bring about use of the dance which is a physical expression of song. Would it not be unwholesome to refuse this usage of the dance merely out of prejudice? It would certainly prove still more undesirable and intolerable to consider as a universal norm the European sensitiveness which gave western Christian liturgy its structure, at the risk of stifling the aspirations of other cultures.

Sacred dances in Haitian liturgy

Haitian voodoo utilizes ritual dances which induce rapture, a trance-like state, and which generate the "crisis of possession". The Christian seeks nothing of the kind. On the other hand, it seems proper that certain forms of religious choreography should be introduced in Catholic worship. To the extent that dance is a sort of transcription of the sentiments of the soul and that it is channelled to express adoration and supplication, it may be considered as a prayer and thus has its place within liturgy. What matters above all is that it be performed with a pure intention and in a spirit of faith. Religious and spiritual dance is a noble way of rendering homage to the Lord.

Physical dance is a prefiguration of the dance of angels and of saints. It is a genuine prayer of praise and of thanksgiving through which the whole body feels spiritualized. It allows one to taste by anticipation heavenly joy and peace. Emile Bertrand remarks:

The dance is a symbol of all the harmony in creation as restored in the risen Saviour. Participation in the dance enables us to comprehend this mystery: the dancer lives by anticipation in the harmony of a restored world, freed from sin and death. He acquires the assurance of eternal beatitude."³

Hugo Rahner is of the same opinion: "Play is a sacred mystery... It is essentially a dance, a reel of truth... Through the music and gestures of the dance, the Christian manifests his mysterious effort towards the goal of his desires, the reel of eternal truth."⁴

The sacred dance must recover its place in Christian liturgy. Father Danielou makes the following plea in its favour:

Thus, the day the Negro world is Christianized, one can foresee a prodigious sacramental and liturgical development, a religious art, a return to the sacred dance, which is now foreign to us. (After all, David danced before the Ark, and the dance is a means of praising God like any other.) I cannot conceive how African negroes praise God without dancing, for the dance is so much a part of their being that it is an integral part of their civilization. Through them we would discover once again the liturgical meaning of the sacred dance. This would have disconcerting consequences for us. How could we impose the Roman Mass on them — this silent Mass, so admirably Western, so sober, so inward, so discreet, so reserved, wherein the mightiest religious feelings find expression in perfect decorum? It delights us because it fulfils in the religious order those qualities of discretion, of moderation, that are so eminently ours, that are the mark of our mystics, and of our saints. But obviously it would arouse no religious enthusiasm whatever among the peoples of Senegal and Morocco. They need a different incarnation of Christianity, one that is in line with their instincts and with their entire being.⁵

For his part, Father Augustin endeavours to introduce Christian songs and dances in the Church. Pioneer of the *Tamboula* movement, he has purified certain of our folklore rhythms in order to utilize them in the service of God.

A rhythm such as the *yanvalou* which is remarkably religious in character may be used to express Christian humility in prayer. Others like the *bambou*... inspire vigour in the profession of faith. The *kongo*, the *ibe*, the *zarinyin* all of which stress joy and peace may be used to sustain meditative moods... *Tamboula* has already introduced a rhythm called sacred which is meant to accompany the sacred dance...⁶

Why not take advantage of these values originating in our Haitian milieu? We should not risk losing this opportunity of running Christianity into an authentically native mould.



Conclusion

We learn from the tradition of local Churches that, in several areas, the vigils of certain feasts

were marked by sacred dances. Regarding this matter, L. Gourgaud states:

Even if the dance has never been an integral part of official worship in the Church, it has



Photo: Charles George

"Land of dances and songs..." Frank Fouché

been performed to a more or less general extent by the faithful or by the clerics who thereby manifested their joyous feelings even inside the church nave.

Traces of this practice were recently discovered in Europe. At Auxerre, for instance, the paschal dance accompanying the sequence *Victimæ pascali laudes* was performed in the nave, the canons themselves participating. Pope Eugene IV authorized by a Bull (1439) the "dances of the sixteen" in the cathedral of Seville. In the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the dancing procession of Echternach highlights the celebrations held on the Tuesday after Pentecost.

Our own way of considering the dance has been subtly influenced by Manichean thinking. The Fathers and the primitive Christians were hard on dancing performed in church, because of prevailing lascivious and obscene entertainments given by professional dancers. On the other hand, they praised the sacred dance associated with faith and sanctified by grace which foreshadows spiritual ascension. We must now interpret the dance in the context of philosophical and Christian anthropology. In this existential and personal perspective, we shall discover that through the dance, the whole human being, soul and body, enters into an interpersonal relation with the Lord, and while communing with the cosmic rhythm renders spiritual and corporal homage to God. Making the drum part of liturgical paraphernalia and developing a religious choreography in the service of Christian worship will enable us to bring to full flowering, under the sunshine of grace, these two essentially Haitian values.

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Taoism

by Yang Ming-che

Condensed from *Free China Review*

Tao is the way of the world and of heaven, an empty cup that is always full, a nothing that has created all things. The old Master Lao Tzu set down a series of paradoxes that has added a mystical touch to the thinking of Chinese intellectuals throughout history.

Many people, including its own adherents, think of Taoism as a religion. Yet Tao — or the Way — is really a philosophy, at one and the same time both an antidote and a complement to that other great Chinese philosophy, Confucianism. Where Confucianism leaves heaven to the gods and earth to men, Taoism is mystical to the point of obscurity. This mysticism subsequently was incorporated in Chinese Buddhism, and part of it was blended with Confucianism to temper the coldness of the Sage's empiricism.

Like all peoples, the Chinese are selfcontradictory. Confucius expressed the strong Chinese sense of the practical, leaving little room for the powerful Chinese aesthetic drive. This is the force that Taoism has served so well. China's greatest writers and poets have been Taoists, even when they were creating in the Confucian tradition.

The earliest Taoist writings are witty and replete with paradoxes that offer all things to the man who understands — or suggests forgetting the whole business of life as not so very important.



瑪利樂

Later, Taoism was more or less taken over by those who were searching for the secret of eternal life. An interesting, off-beat philosophy was made to serve the purposes of a religion. Today's Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are far more mutually exclusive. They can be pursued separately or together, even in the same temple.

As Taoism was changing institutionally, Chinese intellectuals went right on reading its basic works. They still do. This has served the creativity of the Chinese and preserved the Tao.

The fathers of Taoism are Lao Tzu, the Old Master, and Chuang Tzu. Little is known of Lao Tzu. He was supposed to have been slightly the senior of Confucius. The work attributed to him, the *Lao Tzu*, is a composite piece of writing that probably dates from the third century B.C. Also known as the *Tao-te ching* (The Way and Power Classic), the book sets forth a philosophy of government and way of life. The Tao is the source of all things.

Tao and life can be known only mystically and by intuition. To live by Tao it is necessary to be passive and thereby to flow into the unity of the way.

Tao creates a philosopher-king who is the antithesis of Plato's. In essence, he does not rule. He is passive, free of desire, and contemptuous of strife. He does not interfere in the lives of the people. He gives up warfare and lives in essential simplicity.

Tao has a happy way of being all things to all people. It can be used to defend *laissez-faire* or even anarchy. It can also become the fortress of the recluse and the hermit, of the man who gives up the world as a bad job and turns his back on social responsibility. The second sage of Taoism, Chuang Tzu, wrote many stories about great teachers who reject honors and high positions.

The style of the *Lao Tzu* is different from its contemporaries. Old bits of wisdom and cryptic sayings are brought together, often in rhyme. Most of the writing is symbolic and poetic. Water is used to symbolize the weak, soft force that in the end wears away the hardest of substances. Similarly, the female figure, weak and passive, is also the creator and in the end all-powerful. Tao and life are paradoxical and only in understanding this can there be a oneness with the Way.

These are selections from *Lao Tzu*:

The Tao is empty...

It is used, though perhaps never full.

It is fathomless, possibly the progenitor of all things.

It blunts all sharpness,
It unties all tangles;
It is in harmony with all light,
It is one with all dust.
Deep and clear, it seems forever to remain.
I do not know whose son it is,
A phenomenon that apparently proceeded
from the Lord.

To return to the root is called quietude,
Which is also said to be reversion to one's
destiny.

This reversion belongs with the eternal:
To know the eternal is enlightenment;
Not to know the eternal means to run
blindly to disaster.

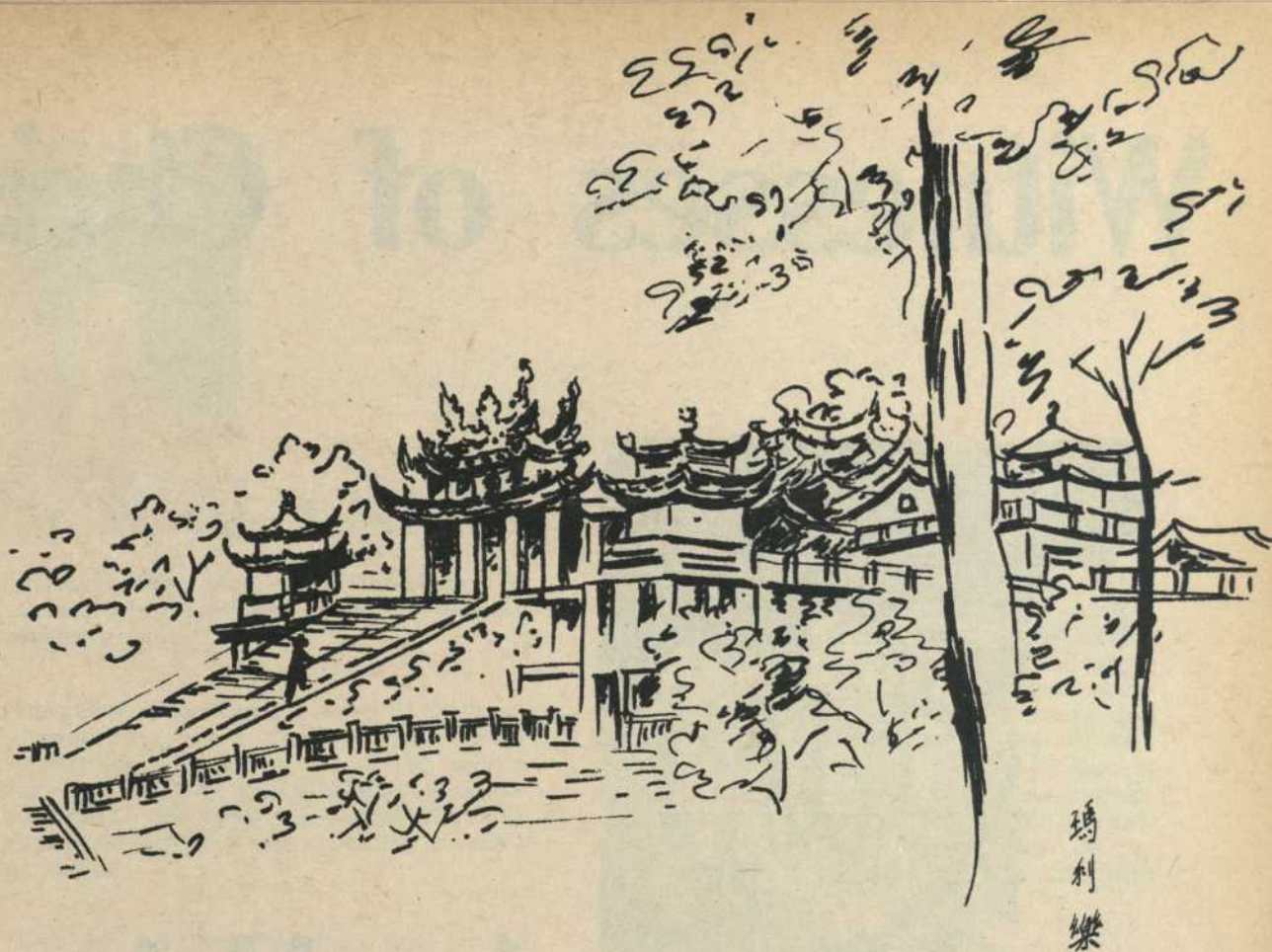
He who knows the eternal is all-embracing;
He who is all-embracing is impartial,
To be impartial is to be kingly,
To be kingly is to be heavenly,
To be heavenly is to be one with the Tao,
To be one with the Tao is to endure forever.
Such a one, though his body perishes, is
never exposed to danger.

The other principal founder of Taoism, Chuang Tzu, is supposed to have lived from 369 to 286 B.C., which makes him a contemporary of Mencius. He seems to have been a minor official at one time but to have lived most of his life as a recluse. Little is known of him. The book that bears his name probably combines his own work with that of disciples and imitators. Like Lao Tzu, this latter-day Taoist resorts to imagery parable, and allegory. As for Tao, he is less concerned with the Way as a guide to life than as a transcendental entity. He is not so much interested in human society as with the universe beyond. Yet, there is an important aspect of Chuang Tzu that was missing in his predecessor. He represents the Chinese case for the freedom of the individual.

Chuang Tzu says man must be freed of his prejudices, his narrow view of the world, his inclination to judge everything in terms of personal experience. Man is no measure of all things, as Confucius has said. He is artificial and of no importance. What matters is the everlasting, universally true Tao; Chuang Tzu is a skeptic, and a relativist. Man's experience is limited. Only Tao can know the all and guide the man who believes in Tao and thus comprehends the underlying unity of all things.

In the end, Chuang Tzu demeans life to the point of glorifying death. Life is labor and death is real; life is sickness and death is the cure.

These are excerpts from the *Chuang Tzu*:
Not to be encumbered with popular fashions,
not to be dazzled by the display of things,



not to be unfeeling toward other men, and not to be antagonistic to the multitude; to desire peace in the world for the preservation of the life of the people; to seek no more than is sufficient for nourishing oneself and others, thus setting one's heart at peace — these were some of the aspects of the system of the Tao among the ancients... To be impartial and nonpartisan; to be compliant and selfless; to be free from insistence and prejudice; to take things as they come; to be without worry or care; not to rely on one's wit; to accept all, mingle with all — these were some of the aspects of the system of the Tao among the ancients... Silent and formless, changing and impermanent! Are life and death one? Do I coexist with heaven and earth? Where do the spirits move? Disappearing whither, going whence, so mysteriously and suddenly? All things lie spread before me, but in none of them can be found my destiny — these are some aspects of the system of Tao among the ancients...

Survival must be considered a partial measure of value. The Taiwan of 1967 has nearly 2,000 Taoist temples. There are about the same number of Buddhist temples and shrines. For some, Taoism is only a primitive religion to which little need be given and from which much may be asked. To others — principally intellectuals and creative artists and writers — the philosophy of Tao remains very much alive. Tao poses more questions than it answers. At times the Tao even seems to say that the questions are not worth answering. Yet for the Chinese mind, looking out at the impenetrable mysteries of life, this is often eminently reasonable and quite satisfactory.

As Socrates was discovering about the same time as Taoism was emerging, the best way to answer a question — and to teach — is by asking one. Tao combines mysticism, skepticism, and an immense amount of wisdom in a system that is basically humanitarian and good. Tao is also evidence that there are no bad Chinese philosophies — only bad students.

Witnesses of Christ



by Sister Thérèse Blais, M.I.C.

in Malawi

These adventurers of the Faith, who are the lay missionaries, priests, and religious, have answered our questions in your name. Their answers honour our magazine and you who read it.

1. How many years did you spend in the country?
In Nkata Bay?
2. What were your activities during these years?
3. Have you found happiness in missionary service overseas (as a priest, brother, sister, lay helper)?
4. Have you any message to deliver to today's youth?



1 Father Chikufenji, autochthonous priest

I lived in Nkata Bay, one of the districts in the north of Malawi, for five years while engaged in missionary work.

Nkata Bay, situated on the shores of the country's main lake, enjoys a quite warm climate throughout the year, except during the months of May, June, and July when it is more temperate. In addition to the climate problems, the hilly countryside around Nkata Bay renders travelling rather difficult.

There are forty-two Protestant sects in the district, so that we can say that there is no genuine paganism left here. The Catholic Church having been the last to be introduced, has not as yet a large number of faithful. However, there are many outstations scattered, at some forty miles from the main mission church. I firmly believe that the present situation will improve. We keep on visiting as many people as possible.

On the whole, I am definitely happy. I am now fifty years of age, and as time passes, it seems that I am growing less active, but I keep walking through the country, contacting people and trying to deliver Christ's message to my beloved countrymen. When they see me, suit-case in one hand and bag of provisions in the other, they tell me I should travel by bus instead of going on foot, as there is a daily bus service. The bus, however, would not prove accommodating, and the purchase of a motorcycle is beyond my means. So my people will continue to see me strolling along with my suit-case and my provision bag.

In the whole district there are only three priests, one brother, and five sisters. We need more lay missionaries also, to help our people know God in the way He wants to be known. Everyone may have heard in one way or another, the Word of God, but their knowledge of God is far too vague. They need to be enlightened. They need more priests, brothers, sisters and lay missionaries.



2 Sara C. Downey, Peace Corps Volunteer

I have been in Malawi since September 1966. I am a Peace Corps Volunteer working under the Malawi Public Health Program whose main con-

cern is the detection, treatment, and prevention of tuberculosis at the village level, through domiciliary care.

There has been a time when I felt quite useless in this country because of my limited knowledge in health matters. However, this feeling has been counter-balanced by the attitude of the people with whom I deal. They are appreciative of any effort made to help them overcome hardship and to aid their country on the road to development.

As for happiness... as far as that is concerned, one can be happy in whatever task he chooses, as long as the goals and means of attainment do not

interfere with his basic principles. The Peace Corps is one of the best ways to fulfill one's duties as a Christian, exhibiting love for one's neighbour regardless of race, creed, or colour.

I still consider myself one of today's youth and as such see so many opportunities for genuine involvement in so many worthwhile endeavours that anyone who feels himself useless in this life, or displeased and dissatisfied, is certainly not being true to himself or to his fellowmen.



3 Sister Germaine Pérusse, M.I.C.

I have been in Africa for eight years. Having arrived in Malawi on September 1, 1959, I spent six months at Mzuzu to study the language and to learn the ways and customs of the people, after which I was assigned to Nkata Bay where I am still stationed.

What about my activities? ...I teach domestic sciences to the primary grades, from the third to the eighth, plus housework such as cooking, washing, ironing, etc., in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

Before leaving school, the graduates go through an examination put by the government on all subjects, including domestic sciences: theory and practice.

Quite a few of my former pupils are now married and most of them have proven to be good housewives. Those who have the good fortune to marry a well-educated man can put into practice what they have acquired at school; others are less privileged and lack money to buy the food they would like or to acquire a sewing machine.

It takes a good part of my time to visit the various villages in the parish. The majority of the population are Protestants. Nevertheless, we

are made welcome by all. The villages situated close to the lake or in the mountains are hard to reach. Thanks to benefactors, our Pastor has bought a boat which enables him to visit his flock more frequently.

Since my arrival here, I had the opportunity to attend the blessing ceremony of three small chapels. The parishioners who contributed all they could for the building of these chapels are very proud of them.

You wish to know if I found happiness in my missionary life? Well, it depends what you mean by "happiness"... Do you mean comfort? Consolations? Fulfilment of desires? No! That is not what I found. For me, happiness is the joy of having realized the ideal of my youth, i.e., the joy of giving myself to the Lord, body and soul; of being conscious that others need me as I need them; of going steadily on towards the Father. Such happiness I enjoy one hundred percent, in spite of the fatigue, annoyances, and disappointments encountered at all hours. My joy consists in doing my share for the extension of the Kingdom of God, making use of my hands, my mind, and my heart.

To modern youth inquiring of what service are missionaries, I answer, "To make known to the world the love of God revealed through human aspects, through Christ Jesus. Missionaries take it upon themselves to realize in this world a deeper knowledge of God's marvelous love for mankind." And, I add, "The Lord did not only call the youth of His own times, but continues to invite the faithful of our times by a special call. He infuses in the hearts of many, such a love for their brethren that they feel urged to share their life, their

whole life, in absolute communion."

Let me tell you once more that our young people in Malawi need you. They are eager for learning. Schools — primary, secondary, and technical — are yet too few. If it be true that the Lord will always say to His chosen ones: "For the sake of my love you will in this world have wife, children, house, and properties to govern in my name," always also shall He say, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt 28, 19)



4 Father Op den Camp, W.F.

After spending some twelve years in the United States of America, I finally got a chance of going to Africa. In December 1957, I arrived in Malawi, and since then I have lived seven years in this country, two years of which I spent in Nkata Bay.

The other five years were spent as a missionary priest in the different missions. Most of my time was taken up with the instruction of people in the Catholic Faith, with the administration of the sacraments, and with visiting the people in their villages. I have also been running schools and trying my hand at building projects. Then, I have always had plenty of occasions of encouraging the people to do something for their country by making new roads or improving their agricultural methods.

Yes, I have found happiness in my life out here. One does experience a feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction, because one realizes that one is helping Africans in many ways. We have done our share in eliminating slowly but surely the three great enemies of Africa: ignorance, hunger, and disease. At the same time, we try to give the

people a better understanding of the meaning of life by giving them the Christian vision.

It is consoling to know Vatican Council II has stressed the point that the missionary must identify himself still more with the people he catechizes. Their problems must be his problems. Consequently, we must take a still greater part in all their community projects, and work together with the Africans for a better and happier life.

The Council has also made it clear that we must try to build a truly African Church. Up to now, we have been imposing on Africans a Christianity and a Church which are strongly influenced by the European or American mentality. But what about the customs, traditions, belief of the Africans themselves? Should we not try to Christianize these, and to imbue them with the spirit of the Gospel? That is a big challenge which the Council Fathers have thrown. It is worthwhile putting our teeth into it. The Church in Africa has to become an African Church.

I think I do have a message for today's youth. I know that many boys and girls are appalled at

the unequal distribution of wealth in this modern world of ours. They sympathize with underdeveloped people. They talk about their problems, hold protest meetings, and are dissatisfied with the way things are in the world.

Why not take the next step and put your talents, your knowledge, and your know-how at the disposal of these poorer people? Surely not

with a feeling of superiority, but with a sense of dedication and brotherly love.

Did not Christ imply this when He told us that we should love our neighbour?

Is it not worthwhile to do something to make this world into a better and more just world, where everybody will have a chance to be happy and develop his own personality, in freedom and peace?



5 Sister Thérèse Blais, M.I.C.

After a ten-year experience in Kaseye, I am now stationed in the district of Nkata Bay, near Lake Malawi. I found it rather hard to leave the mountains, part with my friends living there, forget about my educational and social activities...

This change calls for a new acclimatation; for adaptation to a new people as regards mentality and customs. The Independence of Central Africa has deeply marked this dynamic group which, moved by national pride, is determined to be its own master. Therefore, the mission of the Church, mine equally, must adopt a new form.

In spite of all, I feel a real joy, a happiness such as may be expected in return for self-giving.

I give the best of myself as catechist, and in doing social service. As I am in continual contact with religious and lay missionaries, I can suggest

the essential points of the apostolic movement: comprehension and friendly relations: awareness of the neighbour's needs, whoever he may be; participation in a creative group. Thus, we work together at the creation of an independent Christian nation, happy and peaceable.

In "Man and his World", Saint-Exupéry said: "Evidently, vocation helps one to freedom, but it is equally necessary to ensure freedom to vocations."

You who are keenly awakened to the needs of peoples, and desirous of partaking in their difficulties, problems, aspirations, and hopes, please remember that Africa is calling you... that Christ Himself is inviting you, not in an abstract way, but by His incarnation in the Malawi of modern times.

These reflections are addressed to you, youths of 1969. Well-informed concerning the missionary dimension of the Church, you can no longer remain inactive where you are: be it in a family circle or in a study centre. All of you ought to collaborate with the witnesses of Christ in Malawi for the extension of God's Kingdom.

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ROCHE A BATEAU, Haiti
PORT SALUT, Haiti
CAMP PERRIN, Adresse postale: C. P. 14 Les Cayes, Haiti
MIREBALAIS, Haiti
LIMBE, Haiti
CAP HAITIEN, Haiti
SOUTH CHANTAL, Haiti
TROU DU NORD, Haiti
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PORT AU PRINCE, Novitiate, Cité No. 2, C. P. 1035 Haiti
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RUMPI, St. Patrick's Parish, Rumpi P.O. Box 15, Malawi
KARONGA, St. Mary's Parish, Karonga P.O., Malawi
KASEYE, St. Michael's Parish, Chitipa P.O. Box 100, Malawi
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MZIMBA, St. Paul's Parish, Mzimba P.O. Box 47, Malawi
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KANYANGA, Lundazi P.O., Zambia
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Children are great pets in Haiti.

Photos: Gisèle Villemure, M.I.C.

