

THE PRECURSOR

March — April 1968 Montreal — Vol. XXVIII — no 2

SOEURS MISSIONNAIRES DE L'IMMACULÉE-CONCEPTION

58, RUE DESHOYERS

PONT-VIAU — VILLE DE LAVAL



Listening to the heartbeat of Tananarivo.

Photo: Sister Thérèse Gendron, M.I.C.



MISSIONARY INTENTION — MARCH
Esteem of dedicated virginity in Africa.



MISSIONARY INTENTION — APRIL
Reestablishment of diaconate.

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No 2 — March — April 1968 — Vol. XXVIII

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November, 24 1967.

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Faith, a gift of God / by Gérard Lemieux

FAITH

YEAR OF FAITH

Excerpt from a talk given in Mary Queen of the World Cathedral, Sept. 10, 1967, by Mr. Gérard Lemieux, Radio Canada representative in Rome, during the Council.

Those who have been baptized at birth in a milieu where the Catholic faith flourished and who have later seen their beloved parents die in this same faith, regret not having sufficiently proved their gratitude to them for the priceless boon of baptism. This regret I felt deeply during my stay in Rome. Then and there I resolved to write to my godmother in order to thank her for having presented me to the priest at baptism. Was she not the one who, in my stead, had asked of the Church of God faith and eternal life? How precious is this life wherein blend the human and the divine!

Today, my dear parents sleep the sleep of the just, and at each Eucharistic Sacrifice I pray, "Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids, my father and mother, who are gone before me with the *sign of faith* and rest in the sleep of peace."

With the sign of faith, I, my children, and likewise, I hope, my grandchildren, will go where our dear departed ones have gone.

Obeying God's summons, trusting in Him

In the Italian parish to which I belong I watched the priest, on a Sunday morning, distribute Holy Communion to the faithful. Although I was in the habit of going forward in a joyful mood, something on that particular day held me glued to my bench. What was the matter? Doubts assailed me and I murmured, "O my Lord, You are so great, so good, and I am so miserable! How can I venture to approach, unworthy as I am?" Then, peace again flooded my soul as I recalled the words of the Gospel. "Say but the word, and my spirit

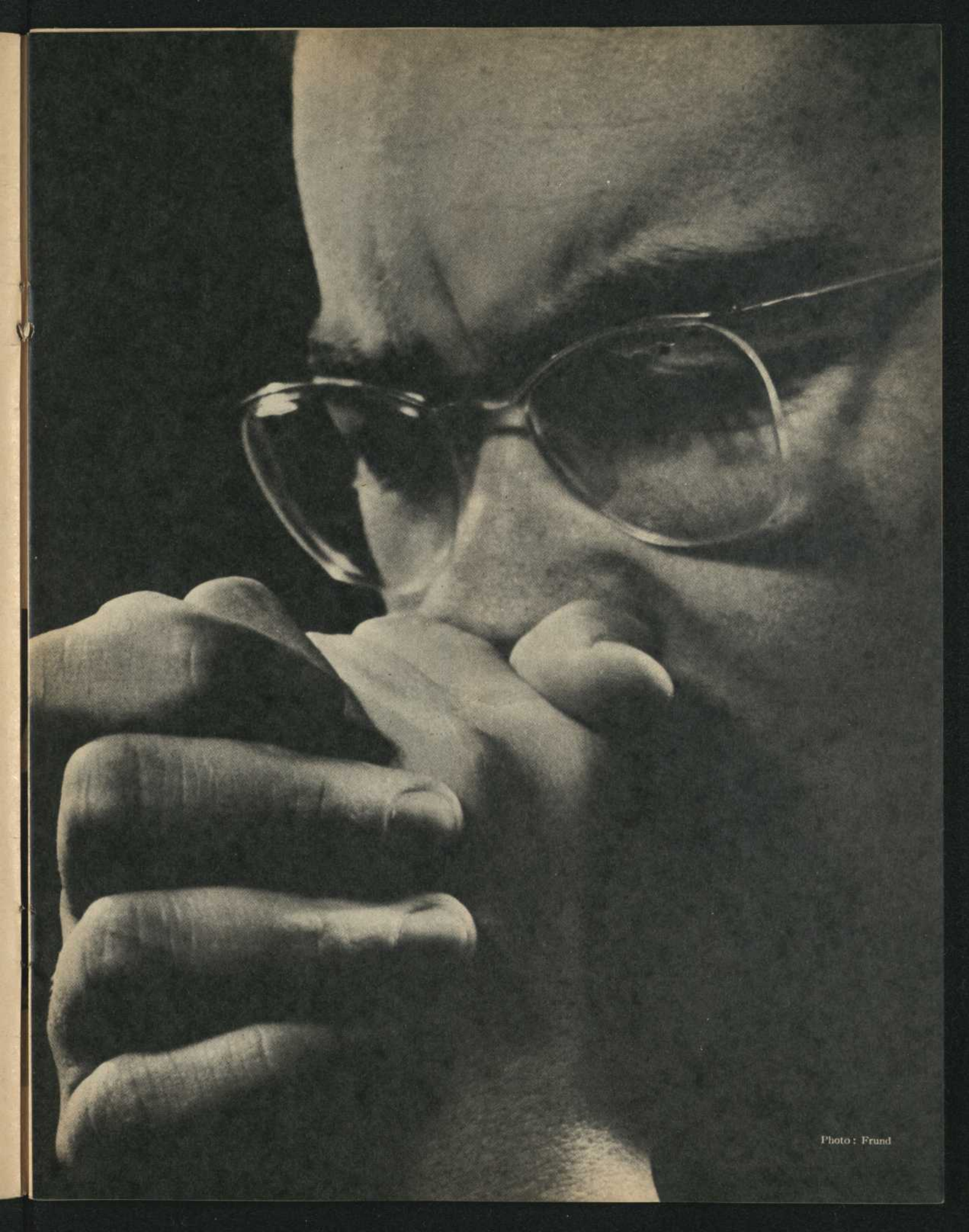


Photo : Frund

will be healed", "Take, eat, this is my body... drink... this is my blood..." I hesitated no longer, but went forward to receive my Lord and my God. What saved me at that moment, what brought me to Him, was taking Him at His word, trusting blindly in His love.

God invites us always and in sundry ways. He meets us half-way. While it is a simple matter for uncomplicated souls to listen to His voice, to obey His call, it becomes an extremely complicated one for those who want to know the why and wherefore of all things before they commit themselves.

Problems of our human condition

The preamble to the *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* states: "Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart. What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what intent? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgment, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us?"

Numerous indeed are the "profound mysteries of human condition". For ages, man has tried to solve these tantalizing enigmas without ever finding satisfactory answers. Even with the best of intentions, the choice he is tempted to make of plausible solutions does not always prove to be the right choice. The most furious battles are often fought within man's soul. If he is a Christian, he is perhaps tempted to reproach the Lord for not delivering him as soon as he wants; or blinded by self-indulgence, he finds God altogether too hard to please. He may even at times mistake evil for good. His scale of values becomes confused. In allowing this, God may want me to wander to the very brink of the precipice in order to force me to rediscover the true light.

Men are not alone in sounding the depths of suffering. We are interdependent. Even within the intimacy of the family circle, all these fundamental questions are put by spouses, parents, children. Each believes in love but in what love? Has faith in that love been kept? Each believes in the same God but in what God? What God has really been introduced to our children in everyday home life? In what God do the children believe? One thing we are now sure of: nobody will ever again "practise" his or her religion just to please parents or dear ones.



Always, we must seek the Light...

Through darkness to light

"I don't know what to do", "I don't understand..." "What is it you want me to do, O Lord?" The human play of light and shadow can be made profitable if it forces us to seek the Light.

Our search often has to be gropingly and tearfully pursued. Secure in our good will, we perhaps thought we were safe from such and such a temptation... But, suddenly, we find ourselves entangled in the profound mystery of our human condition. We meet our own personality, face to face, and the meeting is anything but pleasant. We certainly had not looked for evil. How, then, did it happen that evil leered up at us from the deep recesses of our being? How explain the fearful attraction it secretly exercised? Somewhere, inside of us, crouches a roaring lion, a beast which cunningly sheathes its claws, disguises its fury, dispenses flattery. "What about your vaunted freedom?" it whispers. Then, it goes on to insinuate, "You're entitled to some enjoyment in life... All this talk about self-denial is not for you. Cull roses while you may..." Eventually, what seemed to us clearer than day grows dim and confused. Easy things become impossible. We no longer feel equal to self conquest. After all, we reason, God does not require the impossible. Thus, little by little, we let ourselves go, we believe as if we did not really believe, we pray as if we no longer prayed. Perhaps the only thing that remains to us in such circumstances is the Name of God. Happy are we if we can still murmur, "Lord have mercy on me, deliver me." Happy are we if we can still remember God, if we believe that He can save us. For in the wildest storms He is more present to our souls than we think. He alone can quell the fury of wave and wind, when we find ourselves in peril.

Faith, a gift of God

"By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). In one of his allocutions, Pope Paul VI remarked that this gratuitousness of faith may at times appear to us as rendering useless man's activity. It may seem akin to a passive fatality which looks to God for everything and gives Him nothing in return. Such, however is not the case. Even if God's workings regarding our salvation remain shrouded in mystery, our responsibility exists and our collaboration is not annihilated. God offers; we are free to accept. As Saint Augustine, the Doctor of divine grace, states, we are saved only if we want to be saved.

Faith in the Church

How humble we ought to be if we would have Jesus dwell within our soul! We must love Him so that our faith may grow, for faith cannot stop at faith. We do believe in order to love. Faith calls for love. It must be, for our part, the first fundamental response of our love for God. Since our faith is a gift of God, the more willingly we surrender ourselves to Him, the more He gives Himself to us. Alas! Many today no longer believe this to be true.

For some the Church is not a "sign" of God. "Of what immediate use can faith be?" others ask, while still others argue, "Christians do not appreciate the value of the intellect. They despise the world, scientific achievements... What have they done for the betterment of society, for the promotion of international justice? Why believe in God and in the Church, then? Of what use can faith be?"

Even within the bosom of the Church, far too many do not appreciate the gift of faith. They do not know how to distinguish between essential and secondary things. There are also far too many who ignore the Church's *aggiornamento*, far too many who on the one hand refuse to go along with the renewal, or who on the other hand complain that the Church is behind time, that the advocated renewal is lagging. Impatient of all restraint, several have cut themselves adrift from the Church, in the hope of effecting a more radical renovation. A certain kind of faith in a certain kind of God may easily appear as compatible with infidelity to the Church weighed down as it is by the weaknesses of its members. Some people like to think they can save the world without saving the Church. According to them, the imperfections of the Church are an invitation to seek perfection outside its pale. They believe in a holy Church wherein sinners have no place. The holiness of the Church they question because, always according to their point of view, it is too highly institutional, too much left to the guidance of retarders. But, what is the Church? What is faith in the Church? What would be the use of our faith in Jesus Christ, if we refused to believe in a Church that is without sin, but not without sinners? Ought we to feel surprised at the number of Christians who have left off "practising", at the increase of atheists? In our modern times, the perseverance of Christians will surely have to go hand in hand with the strengthening of their faith in Christ Jesus, and in His Church.

Through Vatican II the Church has reconsidered its positions, but who among us has taken the trouble to read and ponder the *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church*? Our own Canadian Church has also been considering its positions. What are we going to do about it? Of course, Christians whether fervent or indifferent, do not of themselves make up Christianity. In certain countries, faith in God and fidelity to the Church invite persecution, even the risk of martyrdom. Maybe we are headed for such a daring, glorious faith. Is not the way of genuine Christians a way of the Cross? This truth is highlighted by the martyrs Saint Peter and Saint Paul who are honoured in a particular manner during this year of faith. God requires of us a total faith for His gift to us has been total.

Year of faith

The above paragraphs were meant as an introduction to the year of Faith. On February 22 last, feast of Saint Peter's Chair, Pope VI proclaimed the inauguration of a year of Faith. "What form shall our common celebration take?" the Pope asked. And he went on to explain his intentions. "We have a request to make — a small matter, it might seem — but important enough. Peter and Paul the holy apostles, gave proof by their words and their deaths of their belief in Christ. We want you, brothers and dear sons, to keep their memory fresh by professing the same faith... Let us profess our faith to God individually and publicly, in perfect freedom and with deliberation. There must be a wholehearted profession of faith on the part of every man and woman so that the whole Church resounds with a single loving affirmation."

Objectives of the year of Faith

The Holy Father, successor of Saint Peter, clearly defined the objectives he had in mind. He said that the Church must:

- reappraise its holy inheritance,
- recapture its pristine energy,
- reassemble, in well-ordered doctrinal instruction, the content and significance of the vivifying word of Revelation,
- present itself to our separated brethren in a humble and loving attitude,
- meet the needs of the modern world, such as it is, full of grandeur and of wonders, and yet starved of light, deprived of those sound rules of conduct that are indispensable to its wellbeing.



Why believe in the Church?

All these objectives we should strive to make our own, reappraising our religious inheritance, questioning ourselves on the aim of our own lives, finding out in what manner we may quicken our energies for good. Upon my arrival in Rome, a few years ago, I felt great admiration for the genial personality of Pope John XXIII. I used to wonder how this simple old man could adapt himself to the Vatican magnificence, to the Curia officials. One day, I met a veteran Christian reporter who quoted for my benefit the following Italian saying, "Rome seen, faith lost." This reminded me of the remark I had heard passed by certain Canadian clerics, "Nothing good can come out of Rome!" How

many mistrusted the Holy Father, the reforms launched! I admit that I suffered from this state of things, that I felt the need of being reassured. In this dejected mood, I passed through the plaza and gazed upon the gigantic statues of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. It was then that I had the idea of reading anew the Acts of the Apostles and the epistle to the Romans. These readings and meditations rescued me from falling into the habit of griping and criticizing. The apostles, I reflected, became martyrs of the faith by witnessing to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ Jesus. What more could I ask? This was enough for me — to consider my goal as a Christian, to regain my initial



Photo: Félic

Pope Paul VI grants interview to Mr. G. Lemieux.

fervour, to deepen the contents and significance of the vivifying word of Revelation. Through Revelation God disclosed Himself to man and manifested something of His mysterious being.

Especially in this age when Catholic belief is under stress, how important it is for us to take up again the study of Holy Scripture! The Council Fathers who drew up the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* did not intend to have it gather dust on library shelves. All the Italian



More than ever, now that our faith is under stress, let us read the Scriptures.



I often wonder how I would tell the story of Jesus if I were a missionary...

movements of lay apostolate have studied it closely in their programmes.

During the year of faith, we also must cultivate our faith through reading and meditation of the Gospel. While living in Nazareth, Charles de Foucauld composed two pen portraits of our Lord, using short quotations from the Gospel. Our divine Saviour is our unique Model. When, for the first time, I opened the Custom Book of the Union of Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart, I was overjoyed to find Jesus considered as unique Model. This Custom Book compiled in 1909 was originally destined to the laity. Recently adapted, it retains excerpts from the Gospel on faith, hope, charity, humility, meekness, etc. Regulations may be altered, but the words of Jesus remain forever. If we consider Charles of Jesus as our model, it is above all because he proposed to our imitation, the unique Model. Why should we not follow his example in drawing for our personal use a picture of Jesus composed from chosen Gospel texts? Pen in hand, we might mark the passages that impress

us most, according to our temperament or to our present spiritual needs. Perhaps you will succeed in doing this more quickly than I have. For months on end, I have read and reread Saint John's Prologue. I started by underlining one word, then two, then three—Word, Light, Life, World... Today, every line in the text has been underlined. Like a child, I try to learn the Prologue by heart, with less success than a child. I had better go back to school with six-year-olds!

While, throughout this year of faith, we do our outmost to go deeply into the study of the vivifying message of Revelation, we also ought to remember our separated brethren. We probably do not all possess the theological competence called for, to discuss with them their difficult and delicate problems. One thing we can and must do; love them with our whole heart, and pray for unity. Let us keep in daily, prayerful remembrance the members of the Secretariate for the Union of Christians, as well as all those who, in their respective dioceses, are in charge of ecumenical questions.

Finally, the Holy Father bids the Church, especially during the year of faith, devote its energies to spread in the whole world the fragrance of Christ Jesus. "It is only too evident that the times we live in are in dire need of faith," he wrote in his exhortation of February 22. "It will not have escaped your attention... that although the human race makes one astonishing conquest after another over nature... it is nevertheless bent on a course which leads by easy stages to neglect and denial of God."

Two points appear to me as being of the greatest importance in these post-conciliar years. To love the world as God loved it, we must start by believing that He created it, and that nothing escapes His Providence. He expects us to offer this world to Him by the faithful accomplishment of our task as assigned through His providential designs. To love man as Jesus loved him we must believe that God dwells within him. Who understands man better than He who created him and remade him after the fall? To believe in God is to participate in His own re-creation, in the formation of a new man, in the preparation of the new Earth and the new Heavens. What a splendid destiny! What a divine achievement!

To believe in God is to give our mind infinite dimensions, to open our hearts to a greatness that human love alone can never attain. We who are

nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ, we who believe in the resurrection of the body, have been raised by God to incomparable dignity.

Pope Paul VI has defined the chief objectives of this year of faith. In nearly every audience during the past year he has emphasized this subject. He has stressed the need of faith in our modern times, pointed out the dangers of certain misleading theories in the field of theology and of exegesis, warned Christians against abandoning well tested loyalty to the Church in exchange for the empty promise of a revised Christianity...

In an allocution on March 1, 1967, the Pope again touched upon the reasons why he had chosen faith as the leitmotif of the planned celebration: "We have chosen this subject to honour this apostolic centenary, because it seems to us to offer the most certain and direct means of communing spiritually with these great apostles... This choice of faith as the first, sure gift of apostolicity is explained by a twofold motive: faith is the principle of the economy of our salvation and it is the principle of the mission of the apostles... Faith is likewise the principle of our insertion in the plan conceived by God to raise us to the new life, to supernatural life. You certainly know something of the doctrine on the necessity of faith, 'without faith', we repeat with the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, 'it is impossible to please God'."

The leitmotif for the centenary year is faith, principle of the economy of our salvation and of our insertion in God's plan. This is a year during which we should try to live up to the expectations of the Father of Christendom. In order to do so, let us begin by complying to his wishes with regard to the centenary celebrations: "We would like the Creed said, on an appointed day, in every Christian household, in the meeting places of Catholic societies, in schools, hospitals, and all places of worship — in short, in all buildings and among all groups of people where Catholic belief can be proclaimed. Those who say the Creed, will find themselves strengthened in their resolve to live the kind of Christian life to which we are all called."



Magic of Form



and Colour



Origins of philately

Several legends cluster around the origins of the science of philately. As the Greek root of the word implies romance, some have ascribed the beginning of stamp-collections to a Spanish love story. According to their version, a certain young nobleman, who perhaps wished to ascertain the industriousness of his beloved, requested her to paper the walls of his palace with postage stamps! With the help of her friends who combed the country in compliance with her wishes, she set to work with a will. Soon, the wedding bells rang, and the bridegroom proudly exhibited to his guests the original handiwork of his bride.

So much for romance. According to others, the intellectual pursuit of stamp-collecting was fathered by a French teacher. In order to stimulate the interest of his pupils in the study of geography, he requested each child to bring a stamp of various countries and to pin it on the corresponding spot on the wall map of the world. Such was the success of this experiment that geography became the favourite subject of the students.

Still another explanation appears more plausible. According to it, the passion of stamp-collecting really originated in France, the first collectors being numismatists, and collectors of text illustrations. Already, in 1860, a certain Mr. Legras possessed a sizeable collection in which figured nearly all countries under the sun.

But the first to take up stamp-collecting in earnest were children. In 1858, a miniature Exchange was organized at the Tuileries to which the students of various Parisian schools flocked on Tuesdays and Thursdays. About 1860, boy collectors in London began to exchange duplicate stamps; a year or so later, adult collectors followed suit. Eventually, what started as a youthful pastime grew into an intellectual pursuit connoting geography, history, art, science and folklore.

One of the principal attractions of Expo 67 for philatelists consisted in making the rounds of various pavilions to buy stamps published on the occasion of this famous international event. Several countries catered to the taste of stamp collectors by special issues of more than passing interest.

Collections according to countries

It has been said that every methodical collection of postage stamps reflects something of the character of the proprietor. Certain collectors choose their pieces with regard to history or geography, while others prefer artistic or scientific subjects.

Many missionaries like to collect postage stamps commemorating natural resources, economic realizations, historical sites and monuments, the fauna and flora of countries with which they are familiar.

This article does not aim at touching upon all the numerous themes launched by various countries, at different epochs. Rather, we will limit ourselves to a glance at a few groups which sketch, the history, the culture, the animal and plant life of countries where we are privileged to work as missionaries.



Malawi and Zambia

Let us start with the young independent nations of Malawi and of Zambia. Malawi has issued series of postage stamps commemorating its access to independent status. On many of these figure the benign features of the first President, Doctor Kamuzu Banda. Other Malawian stamps stress the industrial and agricultural development realized during the last few years. Lately, Malawi has published a lovely series of four stamps illustrating ancient vessels which were once used on Lake Malawi.

Zambia has published original stamps on education, industry, and agriculture, one of which represents the modern buildings of the University of Zambia. Domestic crafts such as those of the Tonga basket makers have also come in for frequent representation.



Malagasy Republic

Postage stamps launched in the Great Isle are particularly colourful. Of special interest are the coat of arms of various important urban centres with their picturesque mottoes. Tananarivo, city of the thousands, displays on its shield golden fleur de lys on an azure field, in memory of France. Its motto, "A thousand men do not die in a day", implies solidarity, and recalls the time when Malagasy rulers appointed garnisons of picked troops to guard their large cities, the number of soldiers being determined by the importance of the centre.



The good city of Antalaha has as bearings on its coat of arms clusters of the vanilla plant for which the region is famous. Its motto suggests thrift and industry — "Work is wealth".



A stamp issued in honour of the Malagasy University has as motto, "He who is satisfied to remain on the same level of schooling as his father is a simpleton", thus implying that the desire for knowledge is at the root of progress in education.



Ancient mail carriers, the *tsimanoa*, are recalled in an issue portraying one of these carrying the mail tied up in large bundles slung from a pole carried across the shoulder. Another issue shows the progress achieved when ancient postal railway carriages, engines fed by wood, were substituted to barefoot carriers. With the advent of the jet age, Malagasy postal service has been streamlined.



Gorgeously coloured stamps depicting the flora and fauna of the Republic are a feast for the eye of the naturalist. Lemurs of legendary fame often come in for representation. The Malagasy call them *lemures*, unquiet ghosts of the dead, because they lead a nocturnal and all but invisible life.



Stamps of the Orient

And now we turn to the Far East. Taiwan often marks the festival of the moon goddess with picturesque issues of postage stamps. One recent issue pictures the fair goddess laying as it were, claim to her eerie kingdom. Spacemen take note!

A miniature history of the Islands is presented in a stamp launched by the Philippines in 1963. Around the centerpiece which carries emblems of the nation, cluster reminders of past and present glories, of heroes, poets, patriots... Late President Magapagal's achievements are recalled in a symbolical stamp issued on the occasion of his socio-economic campaign. Several colourful stamps commemorated the fourth century of the evangelization of the country by Spanish missionaries. Immortalized in typical issues, we also find the famous bamboo organ of Las Pinas.

Japan's stamps are remarkable for their artistry and good taste. International Rice Year marked the need of more plentiful rice harvests in order to ensure an Asia free from the spectre of famine. Beautiful issues are regularly dedicated to famous landscapes and seascapes, as well as to flower shows. Art also comes in for appreciation, especially in representations of the Noh and of the Kabuki theatre. Industrialization has been stressed by several sets of stamps recalling the stupendous achievements of late years.

Latin America

National heroes, notable social or historical events, the fauna and the flora, are favourite subjects depicted on the postage stamps of Latin American countries. One of the most beautiful religious issues published by Bolivia is that of the Eucharistic Congress of 1961 which bears the inspiring caption, *Todos unidos in Christo*, all united in Christ. Concern for unfortunate little ones is marked in a set bearing a pathetic figure of *del niño pobre*. In 1962, Bolivia published a series to the memory of a great national benefactor of Latin America, Pedro de la Gasca. A special Bolivian issue also noted the fourth centenary of the genial Spanish writer, Miguel de Cervantes.



Peru commemorated the canonization of its glorious son, Martin de Porres, by a handsome set of stamps figuring among others, the saint in his Dominican habit and carrying a broom as symbol of his selfless service of the outcasts of society. Other interesting issues mark the feats of the civil guard, agricultural progress, animal and plant life...

Bartolomé de las Casas, noble defender of the Indians, has been remembered in an issue of Guatemalan postage stamps. An air mail stamp of the same country shows the national tree, the stately *ceiba* (silk-cotton) tree, sacred to the Indians who used to elect their chiefs under it. They believed that lineage sprang from its roots. A recent set of Guatemalan stamps depicts a woman hurrying to market with a headborne load of vegetables and fruits. She appears like an incarnation of the plucky spirit of enterprise which characterizes the women of this country.





Chile has several series of interesting stamps, one of which commemorates the FAO world-wide campaign against hunger. Another set called attention to the adventurer, Robinson Crusoe, stranded on an island of the Juan Fernandez archipelago. The 125th anniversary of the coming of the first steamship to Chile was recalled by stamps issued in 1965. Chile's national flower, the *copihue*, is portrayed in a recent set of Chilean airmail stamps. Giant stone statues of Easter Island also have rated interesting issues.



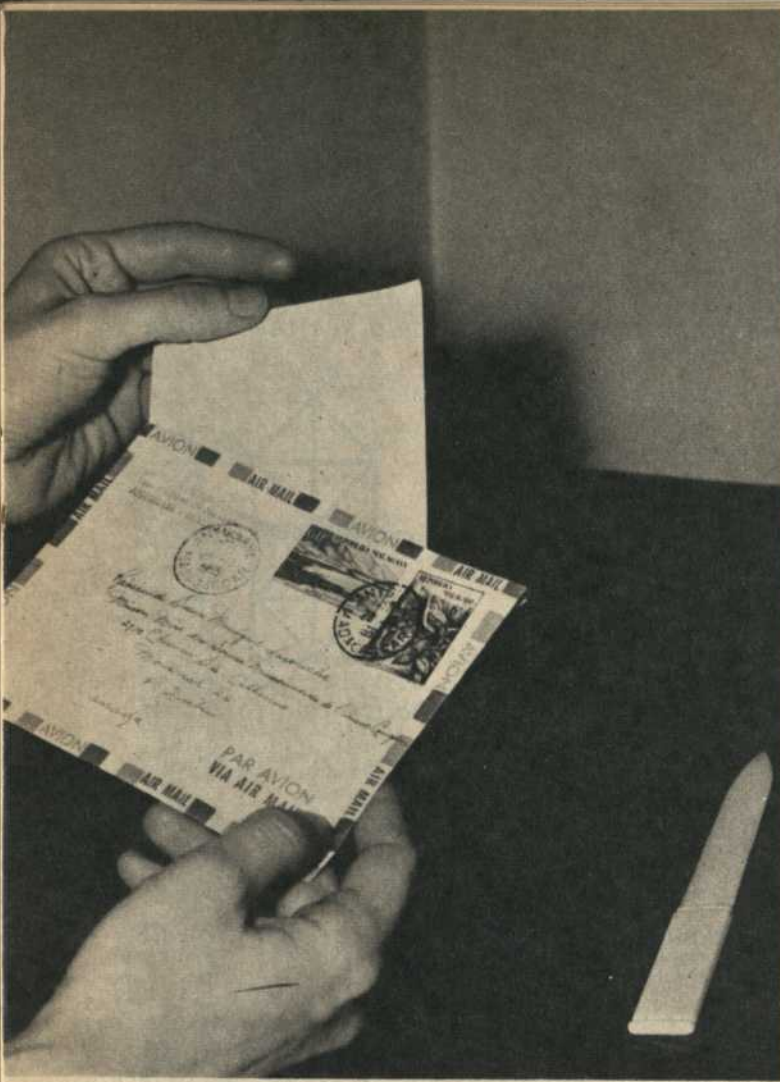
Lovely flowers of the hibiscus, of the flamboyant, of the bougainvillea, often embellish Haitian postage stamps. Heroes of the nation as, for instance, Toussaint l'Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, are occasionally recalled in picturesque issues. Other sets illustrate the culture of Haiti, its historical sites, its campaign of alphabetization, its share in international events.



This is only a sketchy outline of the fascinating world of philately. Yours to explore it further for enjoyment as well as for greater knowledge.



Editorial Team



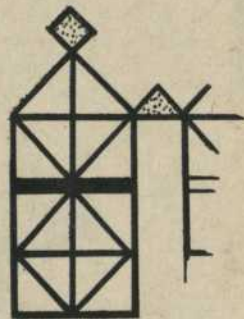
IN SISTER MONICA'S MAIL

Dear Sister Monica,


I have just left the Benedictine Monastery of Ambositra where I was privileged to make my annual retreat in a climate of fraternity and serenity. While waiting for the jeep to pick me up, I am writing this to you in order to share the good things that were mine this past week.


The Monastery commands a magnificent view of hills and valleys, where one may revel in the pleasant rendezvous of sun and shadow. Every day, during my retreat, I took time out to sit in a bamboo grove from which I could see the outline of the Monastery.

I found many a readymade subject of meditation in that shady spot. Gazing at the door and windows, I made the following reflections which I venture to communicate to you, just as I used to do back in Côte-des-Neiges.




So, here goes... To me, the Monastery doors and windows symbolize two forms of


Christianity or of spirituality. The first  well planned and firmly

outlined, watertight, unalterable; the second  wide open to all

horizons. Spiritual life at present appears to stem from the humble approach to God (vertical) and to others (horizontal). Positive approach figured by the sign of the Cross. Is this not the seal of genuine Christianity?

Then, there are, I think, two fundamental spiritual attitudes, the first 

which assumes all human values with open arms, in a gesture of receptiveness, in

an attitude of achievement; the second  which pays homage to the

Creator, the Word made Flesh for love of mankind. The general view shows these two attitudes as converging in the shape of an X. In the centre, I see the Eucharist radiating over our entire life, the Eucharist, Christ's divine Person, the Eucharist the thanksgiving par excellence, God Himself present in His gift to us. Space

represents everything that enters within the course of our lives; daily happenings that bring God closer to us, virtues, graces, trials, worship, desires, appeals, events, meetings, friendships, work...

It seems to me that such a spirituality based on thanksgiving might truly respond

to human aspirations in our modern times. The emblem of Expo'67,



apparently complete in itself, suddenly appears to me rather empty of significance, like the altar "to an unknown God" mentioned in Acts (17:22-23). I would be tempted to insert within the empty circle, the symbols I have been meditating upon, while gazing at the Monastery windows. How could this be done, you ask... Perhaps by considering Expo'67 like a milestone in a history directed by God, inside the human community.

If it were ever given me to build new monasteries, those permanent pavilions erected to the glory of God in man's world, I would like to have their doors and windows marked by the emblems wherein are wedded the truth of man's human life and the truth of his faith.

Just now, I noticed that the doors of the monastery had been thrown wide open. Maybe this is a reality which explains what Louis Lavelle wrote in "Conscience" (p. 108): "Spiritual solitude need not exclude society. Rather, it should beckon to it. It is, in a way, its ideal form. It is the concept of a perfect society which must be presented to men so that they may enter within its precincts."

I can hear Sister Blandine calling me... The jeep is here. Goodbye, Ambositra! I keep your windows fresh in my memory.

Affectionate greetings to you all.

Agathe Durand, M.I.C.

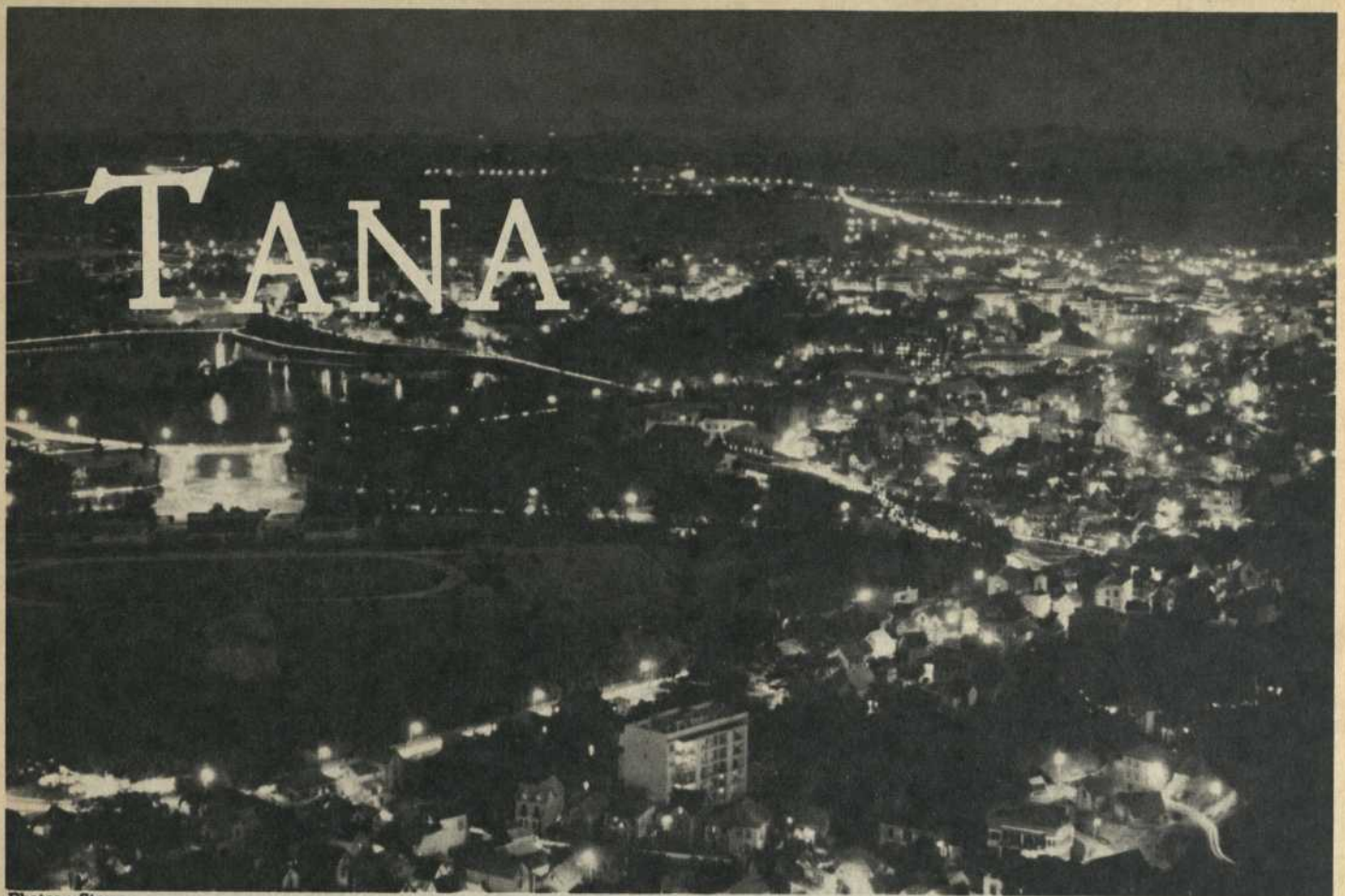
MADAGASCAR

NIGHT OVER

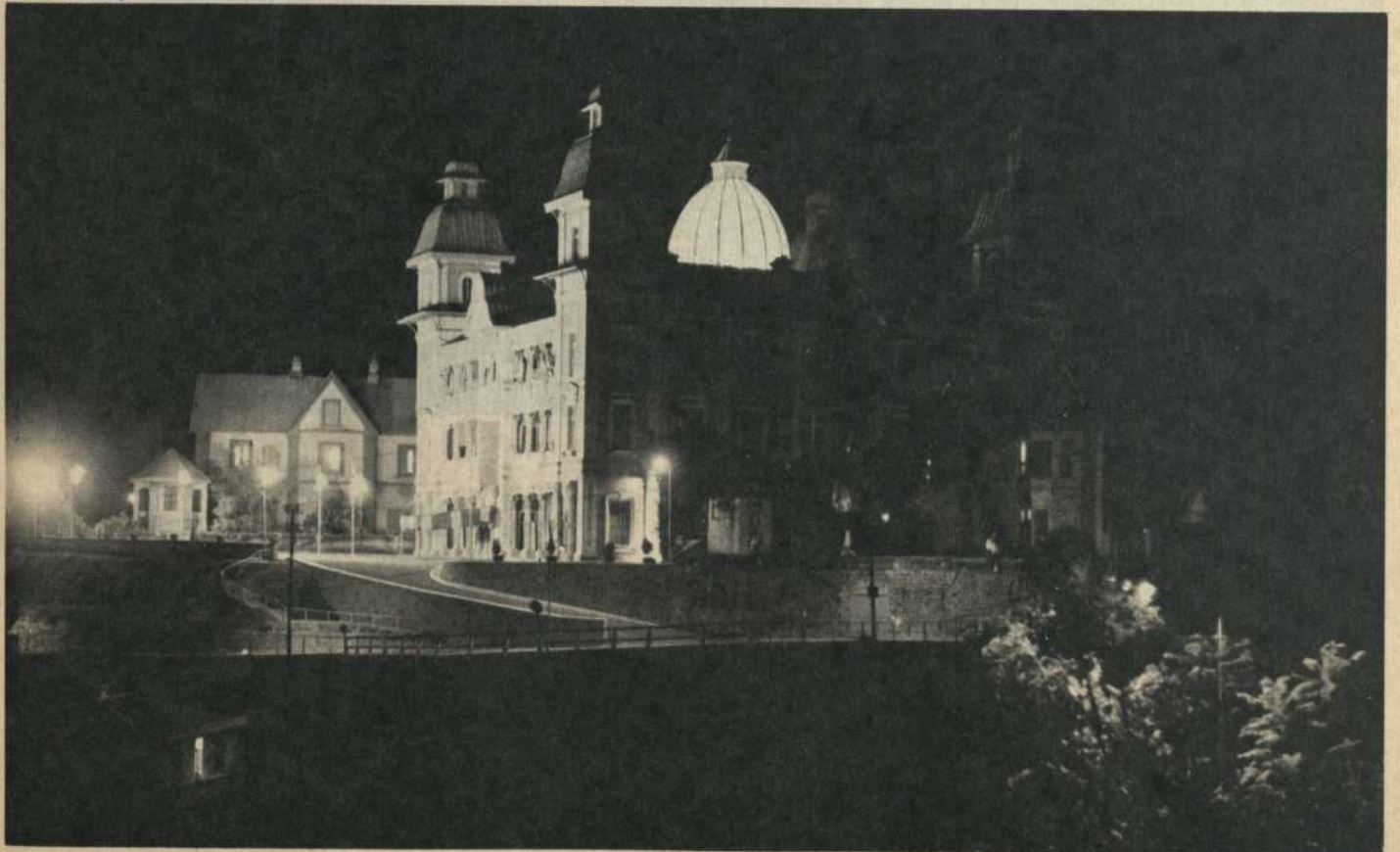
*A kind friend from
Tanarivo has sent
The Precursor the
following Malaga-
sy verses. (Free
translation)*



Photo : Arnout



Photos : Stavy





*If you have listened to
the heartbeat of Madagascar,
then have left it awhile
for your own homeland,
your fondest memories*

*may have grown dim.
Let me revive them today,
spirit-wise;
bring to life again
familiar sights*

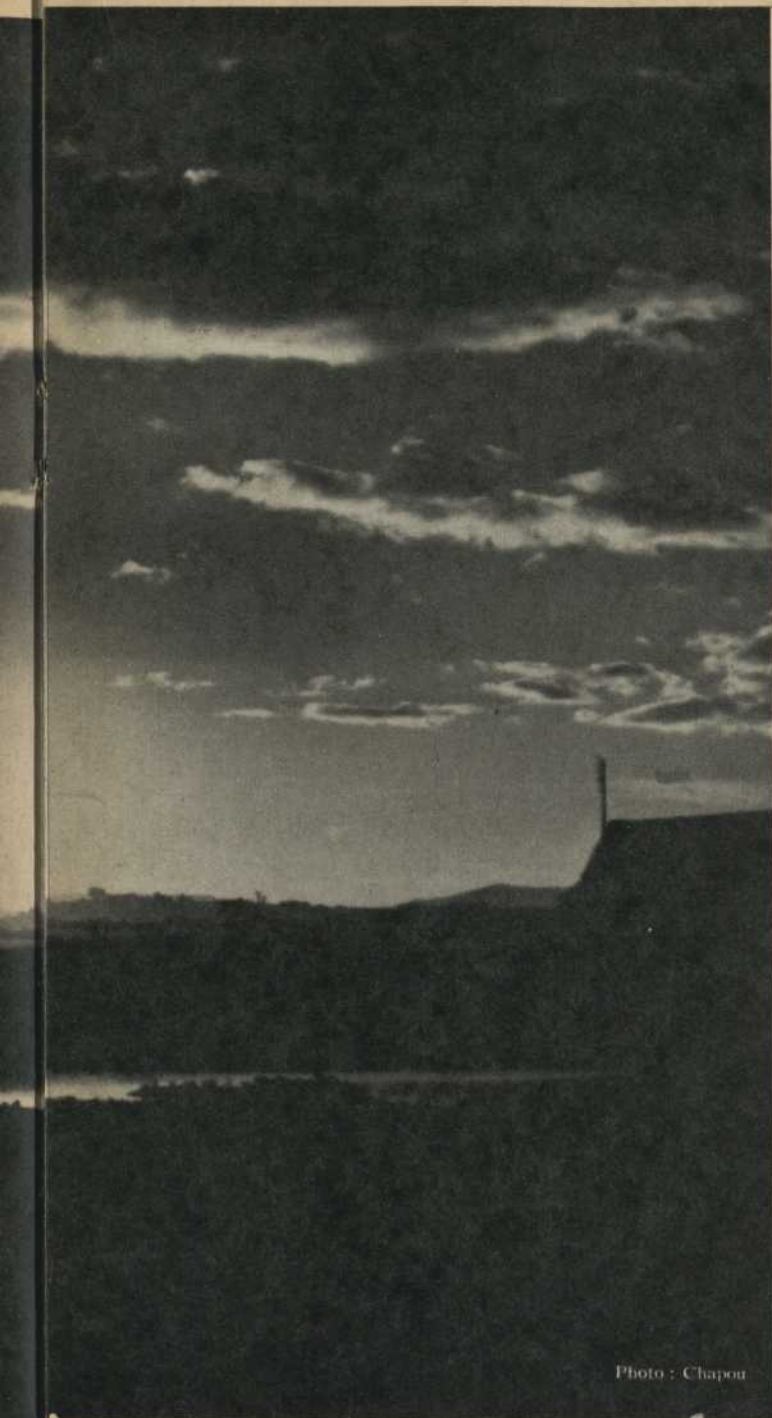


Photo : Chapou

*of Tana, the fair,
of Tana, the beloved,
of our Queen City,
of the Great Isle.
Come, travel angel-wise*

*through space,
to lovely Tana,
Tana, the Queen,
Tana, the fair.*

*O'er a queen's palace,
o'er hoary walls,
night shadows hover
while Tana dreams.
Spangled with star dust,
heady with fragrance,
night spreads its veils
in serene beauty.
See it brooding
o'er Tana, our beloved Tana.*

*Smooth as velvet,
lie the plains.
Gentle breezes
play among the trees;
daytime closes tired eyes,
and sleeps a while
in comfort
'neath starry skies.
Night comes to Tana.*

*On the shadowy "zoma"
in the moon's silver light,
wrapped in their "lambas",
the hawkers crouch.
Like the hum of bees
sounds their talk,
As they watch their baskets,
Their "sobika".
Late they work to feed
the children of Tana.*

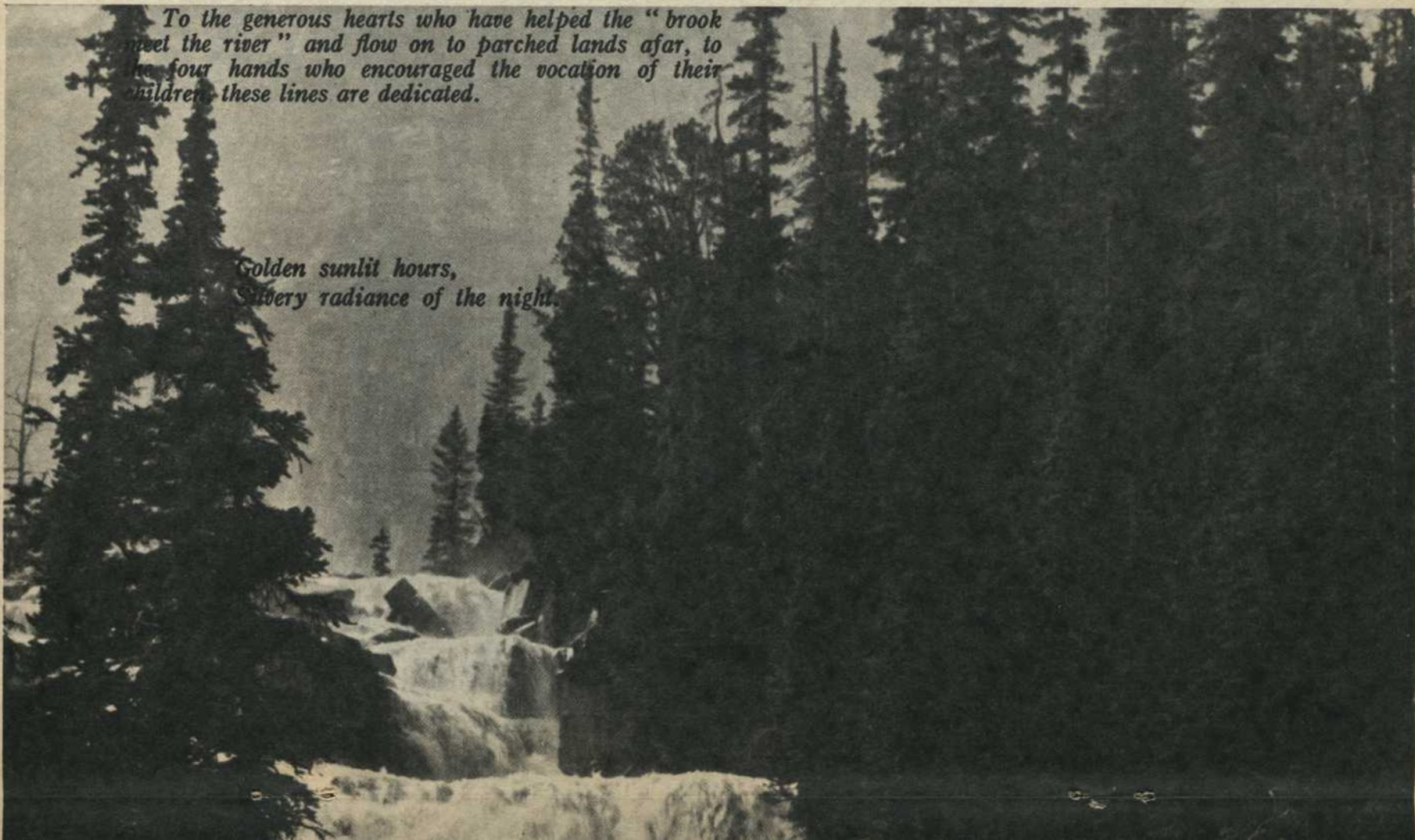
*In the dark,
Lone figures scurry home;
night is coming
To Tana.
Flowers give forth
rare perfume
to lull our slumbers
in this our Queen city,
our lovely capital,
our peerless Tana.*

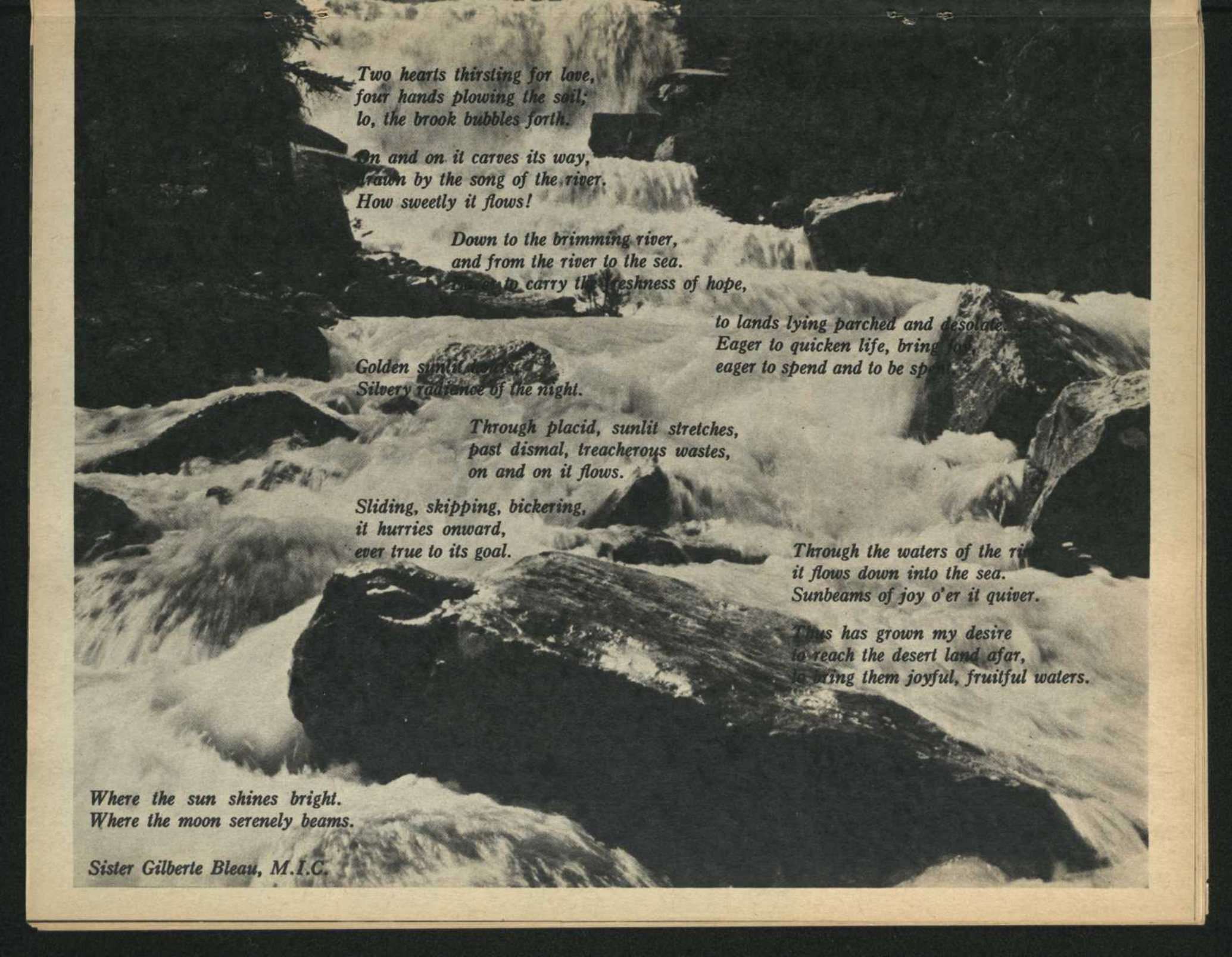
Tsirumbato

Reaching out to Parched Lands

To the generous hearts who have helped the "brook meet the river" and flow on to parched lands afar, to the four hands who encouraged the vocation of their children, these lines are dedicated.

*Golden sunlit hours,
Silvery radiance of the night.*





*Two hearts thirsting for love,
four hands plowing the soil;
lo, the brook bubbles forth.*

*On and on it carves its way,
drawn by the song of the river.
How sweetly it flows!*

*Down to the brimming river,
and from the river to the sea.
To carry the freshness of hope,*

*Golden sunlight days,
Silvery radiance of the night.*

*Through placid, sunlit stretches,
past dismal, treacherous wastes,
on and on it flows.*

*Sliding, skipping, bickering,
it hurries onward,
ever true to its goal.*

*to lands lying parched and desolate.
Eager to quicken life, bring joy,
eager to spend and to be spent.*

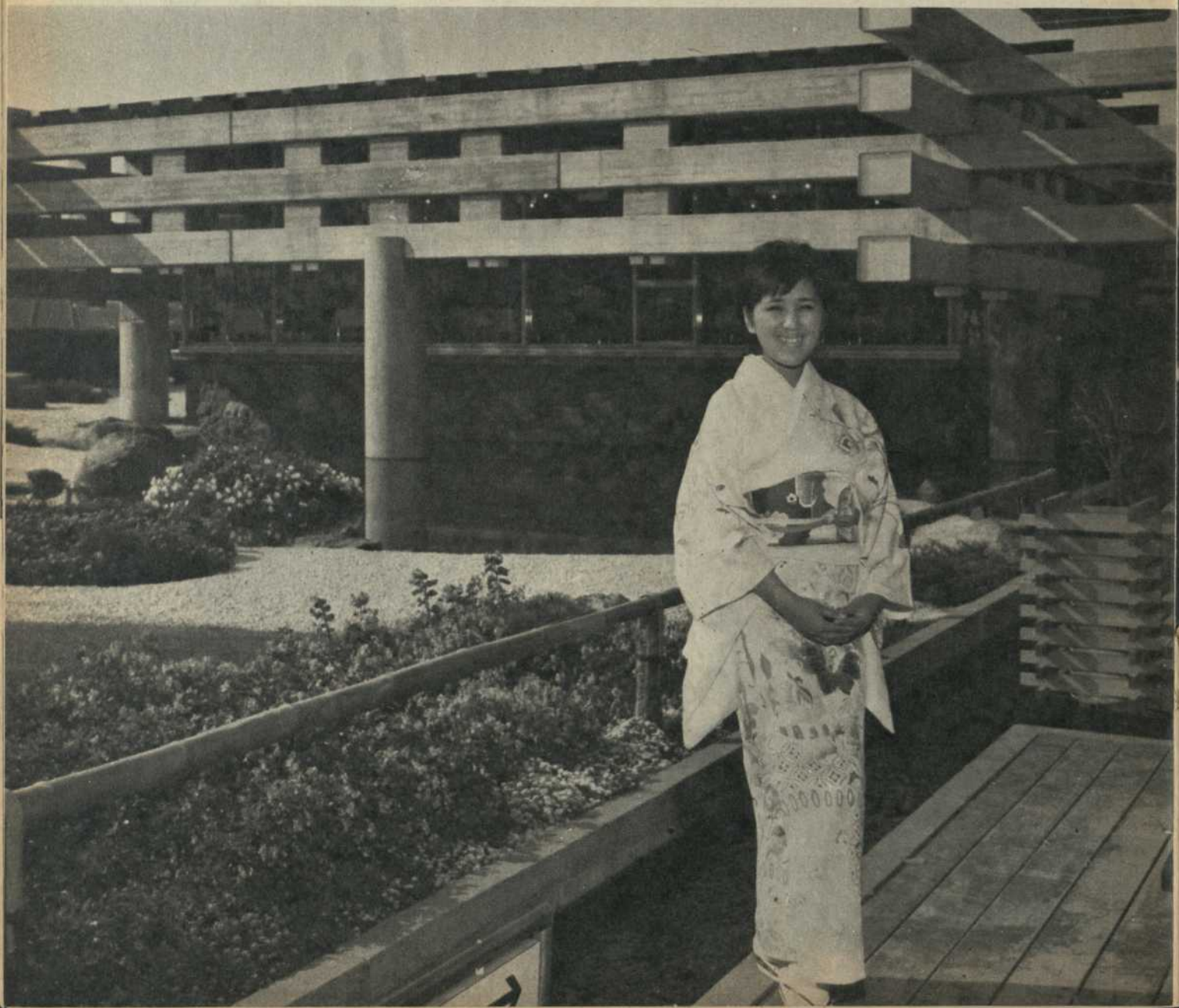
*Through the waters of the river
it flows down into the sea.
Sunbeams of joy o'er it quiver.*

*Thus has grown my desire
to reach the desert land afar,
to bring them joyful, fruitful waters.*

*Where the sun shines bright.
Where the moon serenely beams.*

Sister Gilberte Bleau, M.I.C.

The charm of the Orient and the ingenuity of modern Japan were combined in the Japanese Pavilion at Expo 67.



DUAL ASPECT OF JAPANESE PEOPLE

Introduction

Our Expo 67 pavilion was a modest attempt at bringing a bit of Japan to you. We tried to indicate, through the exhibitions on display, our dual nature as a people — on the one hand, our particular way of life which is unmistakably Japanese; on the other hand, our unusual ability of adaptation to the new, to influence from abroad.

In order to really understand Japan, it is best not to start with statistics, valuable though these may be. Instead, let us observe the simple working habits of a Japanese farmer and of a housewife. A Japanese farmer when he has to dig a simple hole uses a mattock, pulling the earth to himself; a Western farmer who performs the same task, uses

Photos: Expo press service



a spade, pushing the earth away. A Japanese housewife, wringing wet wash by hand, twists the garment towards herself; a Western woman on the contrary, wrings it away from her body.

If we were to consider other such "natural" chores, we would find that Japanese people are always bringing things towards themselves, while Western people generally are pushing them away. Why this difference? The habit, and it is a habit resulting from long years of custom, reflects the Japanese approach to life, believing as they do that all patterns of civilization, even the most complicated and the ever-changing, always lead to men.

Geography and climate

Japan consists of a chain of islands situated off the eastern coast of the Asian mainland. The land is blessed with a temperate climate, possessing a plentiful rainfall which produces luxurious, green vegetation amidst a landscape of gentle and sometimes massive mountains.

Spring gives birth to our famed cherry blossoms; autumn to a myriad of brilliant colours; winter to many sunny days; summer, though warm and humid, to lovely flowers and luscious fruit. It is difficult not to be at one with such an amiable nature. Therefore, from our very origin as a people, we have kept in unity with natural elements, as the farmer who brings the earth to himself, looking upon all forces as part of a harmonious whole.

Homogeneous people

The Yamato people who came to the fore in the islands during the first three or four centuries of the Christian era are generally believed to be our ancestors. During these early years, we developed without much influence from other races, aside of that of small groups of immigrants from the mainland who merged their ways into those of the original inhabitants.

Our culture, our habits, our arts were thus genuinely indigeneous, different in many ways from those of even our closest neighbours. We were a people with our own definite way of life.

First outside influence

While a certain amount of knowledge had been absorbed from the Koreans, (fourth century A.D.) such as the industrial arts of weaving, metal work tanning, ship-building, we did not feel the influence of the outside world to any great extent until the sixth and seventh centuries. Japan, at that time, was still a society of loosely knit clans without any central united government.



The theme of the Pavilion at Expo 67 was expressed in three

The Japanese soon realized that some serious changes of structure would have to be undertaken if they wished to maintain their own identity. They had to modernize if they were to survive as a people with their own customs and approaches to life. Recognizing that they had much to learn from China, they sent a number of students to the mainland to study the legal and administrative apparatus with the view of applying what was pertinent to their own land. For the first time, a strong central government was established linking the many clans into one nation based upon the concept of a capital to be ruled by a succession of Emperors.

At the same time, however, the Japanese took every precaution not to lose their own valuable heritage while introducing new forms. Modern change, they realized, could well push aside their own creative concepts, resulting in the very fate they wished to avoid when they sent their students

OSAKA

JAPAN



sections: "In harmony with tradition", "In harmony with technological progress", "In harmony with nature".

to China. They, therefore, systematically collected all the many myths and legends preserved until then by local chieftains. They brought the new structures and the old ways together, adapting them to the changing conditions, trying to unite them into a harmonious whole, the finished product being Japanese although fashioned after the Chinese.

It is from this period (sixth century A.D.) that the tradition of adaptation begins, a characteristic we have maintained throughout most of our history, except for a relatively short interval of time. This process of assimilation and refinement can especially be discerned in the development of our written language. Chinese characters were introduced into Japan during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. However, instead of merely adopting the Chinese symbols, Japanese scholars added their own forms such as the *hiragana* and the *katakana* syllabaries, basically Japanese alphabets, the results being a written language particularly Japanese, although patterned after another.

Refinement of culture

After taking great breaths of fresh air from the outside, the Japanese spent the next few centuries refining and remolding that which they had absorbed, allowing time to play its creative role. The years blended the old and the new until that which emerged was particular to Japan and to no other country.

Our culture and thought reached new heights of complexity and sophistication from the sixth to the seventh century, a period during which Europe was in decline.

Great stress was placed on the more affluent people to have them study and create. Large numbers of Japanese spent a considerable part of their time in the pursuit of learning and of creativity. Many examples still remain from their vital age, especially those images of nature that the artists painted on silk with deft and delicate strokes. Indicative of this age was an openness and receptiveness to all ideas, not only in the field



The new, streamlined Japanese train, fastest

of culture and of government, but also in the religious life of the people as illustrated in the following story. A Japanese Buddhist priest, as is the custom among Buddhists, travelled through the countryside, living with the people, reciting to them the beliefs and concepts of Buddha. As do all or most Buddhist priests, he always carried a bowl in which he received offerings from the people. But never did he permit his bowl to be filled to the brim. One day he was asked by a student why he never allowed his bowl to overflow. "For the same reason", he answered, "that I always leave some of my inner being empty. If I were overflowing with all thoughts, how could I receive any further learning from people? It is with my bowl as with my entire self; a portion must be available to receive the new that can flow in with the old." The open bowl is symbolical of the Japanese outlook and readiness to receive, to adapt, to be open and to refine.

Closed Period

Like Europe, we went through a feudal age during which there was much division and turmoil.

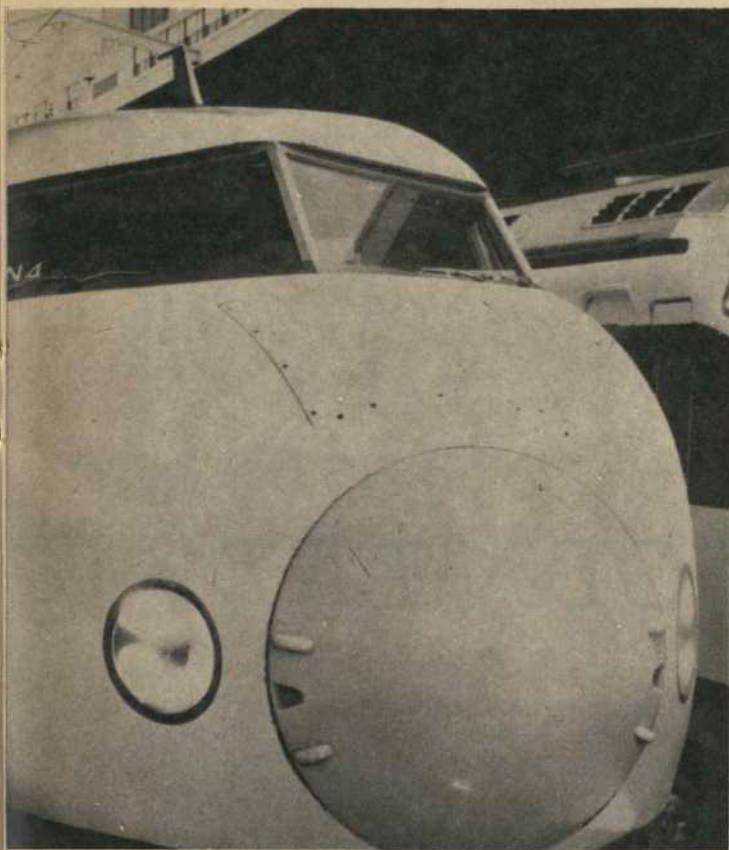
This finally resulted in a period of nearly 250 years, from 1639 until close to 1867, during which Japan sealed herself off from the outside world. For the first time in her history, no ideas were permitted to enter from abroad or influence the Japanese in any way, although attempts were made from time to time to offset this negative attitude.

It was during this age of backwardness, similar to some extent to Europe's medieval age, that Japan ceased to advance and keep abreast of developments in other countries.

New Awakening

Modern Japan can be said to have started with the year in which Emperor Meiji ascended the throne — coincidentally the same year in which the Confederation of Canada was established.

Feudalism and its class distinctions which had been permitted to take hold, had to be shunted aside since it was hindering Japan from maintaining its role of openness and adaptation, and from communication with people throughout the world, thereby preventing it from developing along modern



in the world.

lines. The year 1867 can be considered as the year in which Japan renewed its characteristic of adaptation, enabling it to move into the twentieth century.

To some extent, it may be said that the Meiji reform was motivated by the same conditions as those prompting the changes back in the sixth and seventh centuries. On both occasions, Japan discovered herself to be in a relative state of underdevelopment with the major powers; in the first instance with China, in the second with the Western world. She had to make drastic changes if she wished to catch up with the rest of the world, just as she had had to undergo a major renewal in the sixth and seventh centuries. This was a very drastic period for Japan, one fraught with many uncertainties and conflicts. Once the decision was taken, however, she did not hesitate.

New social governmental structures were introduced, enabling the rise of a modern industrial nation. Commercial and social ways, familiar to the West, came to be accepted by the Japanese. Large industrial cities began to dot the countryside. But

again, as in the great period of change, the attempt was made to mold the new with the old, never losing sight of tradition, trying to create a unity between conditions that often appeared to be in contradiction.

While growth was rapid, right from the beginning, and a modern Japan of large vital cities began to emerge, it was not until the end of World War II that Japan truly took steps that would bring her into the rank of the foremost nations. Although our industries were almost completely destroyed during the war, we started to build anew. Great efforts were required of our people, but they rose to the challenge just as they had done in the previous great periods of growth. In truth, it can be said that 1945 marked the beginning of a new age for Japan.

During the past twenty years we have been fortunate enough to emerge as a leading industrial country, truly in tune with the twentieth century. Our shipbuilding industry is today the largest in the world; our crude steel output and automobile manufacturing; third, our electronics and technology amongst the most advanced. But we do not list these figures in any spirit of boasting, since we are aware that this was accomplished only at the cost of tremendous hardship on the part of all the Japanese people.

As we look around us, particularly at the displays shown in our pavilion, we realize we have made much progress, but that there is still a long way ahead. In 1867, we started on the road back to openness and adaptation with all new forces especially with Western ways. We are still in the midst of this era, at a stage that we call co-existence, the West and the East living side by side in Japan, but not yet in full harmony. As with the Chinese period of influence, we need many years in which to absorb and refine these two ways of life. Time, possibly centuries, will have to play its constructive role. Time, as in the past, will bring the many facets together, merging the whole into a completeness, the form of which we cannot yet foresee.

We look to the future with great exhilaration, our bowl held out to be filled but never to the brim, ready as always to bring the goodness of the earth towards ourselves. This is indeed an age of great romance for all mankind.

It is in this spirit that we will be hosts to the world at Expo'70 to be held in Osaka, Japan. It is in this spirit that we have adopted "Harmony and Progress" as the theme for Expo'70.

Japanese General Commissariate Office Expo'67

CHINESE CENTRE

A charming Chinese student chatting with university companions, could not help expressing her astonishment when she discovered that the Chinese Centre was situated right in the residential quarter of ambassadors. "How unusual!" she exclaimed.

In fact, where the stately residences of the diplomats are grouped, in the district formerly known as "Côte des Sables", there stands the Centre, discreetly sheltered by towering maple trees. Oh! the maple trees of Ottawa! There is a touch of magic to them especially when they are clad in autumnal garb of red, orange, and golden yellow...

Like a banked fire which suddenly leaps into brilliant flame, the Chinese Centre has quietly made its way in Ottawa since September 12, 1966, and is now fully launched.

During its first year of foundation, the work registered a few limping endeavours. The organization really took birth on Bronson Street, but hardly ten months had gone by, when it was found expedient to look for a larger property. Gilmour Street offered temporary shelter. Soon after this new transfer, it became necessary to find a more spacious house. The Centre

having gained a favourable reputation through its friendly hospitality, the news had spread rapidly and the premises had once again proved too exiguous.

The residence at 30 Goulburn Avenue promised to be the right size for our present needs. As it happened to be available, we acquired it and moved in, October 1960.

Today, the Centre runs smoothly and is well frequented, thanks to the habitual visitors who never fail to sing its praises to their Chinese relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

Who are these habitual visitors? The Centre boasts of being "a home far from home" for Chinese youths who, for the greater number, have won scholarships as a means of pursuing higher studies in countries abroad. The Chinese Centre does not offer these graduates tourist accomodation, nor does it function as an inn or a motel. It aims at being a harbour of peacefulness where a Chinese atmosphere prevails.

The house is a three-storied building. The ground-floor comprises a lobby leading to a hall sometimes used for meetings but

Neighbour to Embassies



by Sister Valéda Lemoine, M.I.C.

more often as a living room where T.V., radio, piano, and other musical instruments are at the disposal of musically-minded visitors; a spacious dining room where meetings are occasionally held; and a chapel, now much too small for the number of Chinese, about thirty, who attend Mass on Sundays, Catholics and non-Christians as well. A really ecumenical reunion! The Eucharistic celebration over, all sit at a common table for a convivial meal.

Adjacent to the dining room and separated from it by a folding door, is a cozy solarium. Windows on three sides, almost give one the illusion of living outdoors. The view is one of pleasant surroundings, of sheltering trees, and flowering bushes. This is the particular domain allotted to me for the purpose of giving private lessons. I teach languages not only to the Chinese boarders but also to many foreigners who want to learn French or English. Ambassadors, ministers, professionals, and others, ask to be taught the languages they need most for the fulfilling of their important office. Such contacts give me the opportunity to help in various ways: by encouragement, exhortation,

advice, according to circumstances. If I do not always find the right word at the right time, I have recourse to some books in our modest library, which incidentally, I would like to see better stocked.

As mentioned above, the Chinese Centre aims at being a "home far away from home". For those who need more active amusements, there is in the basement an attractive, well-equipped room with ping-pong and billiard tables, etc.

The third floor is exclusively at the disposal of the Chinese girl students who board at the Centre. Besides private rooms, there is a kitchenette where the girls may cook their own food.

Study is the principal occupation of our young boarders. The majority of the Chinese students speak English fluently enough, although they do not master it as they master their own native language. This, added to the difficulty of getting used to our methods of teaching, means that they need courage to keep steadily on to advanced studies.

Under the impulse of the devoted directress of the Centre, Sister Nina Ennis, M.I.C., any meeting turns out to be a familial

affair. Our chapel has witnessed more than one liturgical ceremony: baptism, confirmation of children and adults, betrothal, marriage, etc. Many of these results spring from fraternal meetings at an afternoon tea.

Mr. Y.C. Hsueh, the new Chinese Ambassador, who honoured the Centre by a courteous visit, expressed admiration for the family spirit which visibly animates the little community. He thus interpreted the impression of all the diplomats who escorted him.

It is indeed wonderful to have our Chinese Centre in the midst of the embassies of various countries. The house looks like a majestic castle of old, but inside it is a beehive of activity. All day long and until late at night, students come and go.

When at 11:30 p.m., I see the window panes on the third floor still alight I cannot help reflecting with admiration upon the strong aspirations of our Chinese students, always eager to reach a higher degree in knowledge.

Our Centre with its smiling guests is a reflection of China itself, so enigmatic and yet so attractive. May its guests ever cherish the inheritance of art and culture received from the motherland.

Sister Valéda Lemoine yesterday... today.



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Malawi

NEW DESTINY OF ANCIENT EMPIRE

by A. Kalilombe, W.F.

In the Land of Living Flames

The Republic of Malawi officially inaugurated on July 6, 1966, is but a fraction of a once far-flung empire known as the land of the Amaravi (or Marawe, Maravi, Malawi) and made up of several of the tribes who are still living today in Central Africa. Their respective chiefs were subject to an emperor whose official name was Karonga. The term Malawi itself which designated the empire seems to refer to the lake. Its real meaning, "living flame", is a metaphor doubtless inspired by the reflection of light upon the waters.



This ancient empire comprised all of what is now Malawi, vast portions of Mozambique and of Zambia, and parts of Tanzania and Rhodesia. How it originated is a puzzle which remains very hard to solve.

Portuguese maps dating from 1546 and 1570 clearly indicate Lake Malawi which the Portuguese also called Zaflan or Zachaf. In 1616, Gaspar Bocarro, a Portuguese official, related having crossed a certain lake which he called Marawy. Other accounts of this period mention the "Maravi" empire and describe the Amaravi, a warlike nation governed by Karonga (see records written by Fr. Manuel Baretto in 1667 and Fr. Manuel Godinho in 1663).

Other Portuguese explorers of this period furnished lists of the names of a series of tribes, districts, and chiefs still in general usage. Although the Amaravi then formed one nation, time had been when the various tribes underwent a process of unification, while they occupied the land and proceeded to organize.

Whence did they come? The Amaravi probably belonged to the successive waves of Bantu peoples whose migrations appear to have started at the beginning of the Christian era, and to have continued for several centuries.

Malawians of the present day usually indicate the north as their place of origin. When they first arrived in what is now Malawi, the country was already inhabited by Hottentots or Bushmen. Legends and folk tales still mention "mysterious pygmies" who lived in caves and used poisoned arrows as weapons. Eventually, the "little men" were nearly all driven out or annihilated.

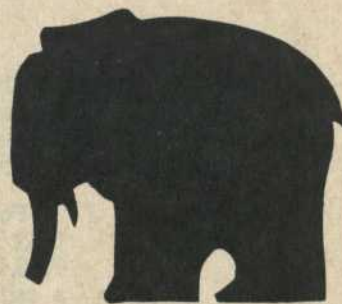
With the branching out and multiplication of clans and tribes, the domain of the Amaravi was constantly being expanded. Nevertheless, Malawi formed a single empire or rather a sort of closely knit Commonwealth.

With the passing of time, the unity and cohesion were ruptured and independent tribes and chieftaincies came to the fore. Slave trading apparently accelerated the desintegration. In the nineteenth century, invasions of Ngoni and of Yao wiped out the last vestiges of an empire which people still remembered when Livingstone explored the land in 1859.

It was indeed a happy thought to have given the new republic the ancient name of Malawi. A new destiny is doubtless dawning for these tribes formerly so closely united.

A kindly, hospitable people

Of Bantu stock, the African peoples of Malawi spring from many tribes, some of which came from the north and others from the south. The largest group is the Chewa. Then come the Lomwe, the Nyanja, the Yao, the Ngoni, the Tumbuka, the Nkhonde.



Under the British protectorate, these tribes learned once again to live together in harmony, although a staunch tribal spirit subsisted for a long time. For instance, the Ngoni continued to look down on the Chewa and the other tribes they had conquered during the last century. The cruelty of the Yao slave merchants was never forgotten. As to white settlers they were, until recently, considered as thieves of African soil.

Such feelings and resentments are fading, thanks to modern communications and frequent contacts in school and at work. Marriages between members of different tribes are no longer frowned upon.

According to Doctor Banda, President of the young republic, tribalism and regionalism no longer signify. The only thing that matters now is the shaping of a united nation. This growing national consciousness carries with it a new and urgent sense of unity, of harmony, and of collaboration.

Foreigners who come into contact with the people of Malawi are favourably impressed with their gracious qualities. This was the case especially for those who attended the ceremonies held in honor of the official declaration of independence in 1964. Visitors felt in the midst of a hospitable people who put their guests at ease with warm friendliness and frank simplicity. On buses and trains, in shops and in the markets, reigned a climate of amiability and good humour.

Of course, here as everywhere a certain percentage of disagreeable people does exist especially in large urban centres. But, in the country as a whole, foreigners know they have nothing to fear. Not only are they welcome but, if need be, they can rely on aid and protection.

A big family

Among the noteworthy characteristics of the Malawians, is the hold that the village has upon them. Relatively few are those who have been born in the city and who have always lived there. First, because there are not many cities, and secondly, because the majority of those who work outside, return to their tribal villages at regular intervals.

Malawians nourish a strong sense of community, and remain deeply attached to their kinsmen. They keep on living according to the clan or extended family pattern which comprises all those who can claim a common ancestor.

Such clan families are patriarchal or matriarchal, depending on whether descent is reckoned from the paternal or maternal branch. Nearly all the tribes of Malawi are matriarchal. The few patriarchal tribes, such as the Ngoni, are gradually tending to adopt the customs of their neighbours in this matter.

Of course, the traditional society cannot remain unaffected by present day evolution, and certain ways of life have consequently been modified or abandoned. Nevertheless, the sense of belonging to the clan remains deeply rooted. Each individual finds himself linked not merely to his father, his mother, his brothers and sisters, but also to his uncles, aunts, in-laws, etc. He is expected to help them out, to keep them posted on his own affairs, to consult them in all important matters of common interest such as marriages, births, deaths... His salary does not belong to his nuclear family only but must be used in the interests of the "extended family".

This community spirit explains how the Malawians treat even strangers as remotely belonging to the big family community. Any aged person they happen to meet is addressed as "father" or "mother" as the case may be; young people are called "brothers" or "sisters"; those of ages in between, hear themselves called "grandfather" or "grandmother".

Even the fact of having shared a common task or of having lived in the same place suffices for people to consider themselves as relatives. This custom seems confusing to the whites. For those born into the system, however, no better way exists of manifesting cordiality in daily contacts.

In a broad sense, the family spirit can foster national unity of which it is a dynamic element. The President becomes the "Father of the Nation" and the inhabitants of Malawi are considered as brothers and sisters. Such a mystique is counted on to intensify collective realizations, the "projects of mutual assistance" now so numerous. Malawians cheerfully get together to build schools, bridges, or to participate in any other enterprise of general interest.

GREAT STRIDES IN PROGRESS

Once neglected

Compared to its neighbours, Zambia and Rhodesia, Malawi does not possess many natural assets on which it may rely. It has no mines except a few stone quarries and a small cement industry at Chingalume. Prospectors have recently uncovered a number of minerals such as bauxite, coal, thorium (a radio-active metal), gold, and mica. However, none of these finds exist in economic quantities. Moreover, Malawi's distance from its principal export outlet, Beira, and the high cost of transport involved is a limiting factor in the sale of minerals. A few light industries exist in Blantyre and its vicinity; soap, vegetable oil, biscuits, cigarettes, blankets, fishing tackle, clothes, furniture... Commerce and national revenue bring in so little that England was long obliged to make up the annual deficit.

In fact, Malawi seems to have been neglected in the past in favour of its partners in the former Rhodesia-Nyasaland Federation. Outside of certain improvements in agriculture and in forestry, very few development projects were launched.

The only available employment the Malawians could hope to find lay in the agricultural field, in fisheries, or in lumbering. They might, occasionally, be hired for construction or other labour, but they were never sure of permanent jobs. Not only was work scarce, but salaries were generally lower than those of neighbouring nations.

This explains why the people of Malawi have always emigrated in great numbers to the mines and farm lands of Rhodesia, of Zambia, of South Africa, and of Tanzania. In the year 1960, about 159,000 adults were absent from their homes; 113,000 worked in Rhodesia, 28,000 in South Africa, and 17,000 in Zambia.

When labourers intend to expatriate themselves for a long while, they usually take their family along. The majority, however, are recruited under contracts of only one or two years or even of a few months. This massive emigration poses many problems. In certain areas, all the men have virtually abandoned wives and children. Many are the homes thus broken. But, for these people, as well as for their country in general, emigration proves an important source of revenue, and allows Malawians to satisfy their thirst for adventure.



Today's expansion

Since its inception, the new republic has gone to great lengths in order to ameliorate its economic situation. Industries are now being created which will offer opportunities for local employment and for the exploitation of new sectors.

In his desire to encourage development, Doctor Banda does all in his power to cultivate friendly contacts with Mozambique, Rhodesia, and even with South Africa whose social and political ideas he is far from approving. Besides, he strives to win the friendship and the assistance of Great Britain, Western Germany, Israel, France, the United States, Taiwan, Denmark.

The Corporation for the Development of Malawi (part governmental — part private) is beginning to produce good effects. Important industries such as the Whitehead Textile Company, a distillery, a Danish brewery have been organized. Other vast projects



include the *Sucona* (sugar) of the Lower Shire and a paper industry to be supplied by the northern pine plantations. The Njula dam, recently inaugurated by the President, furnishes cheap electricity, a further encouragement for the installation of new enterprises.

Nonetheless, Malawi is an essentially agricultural country. Many Malawians work most of the year in small-scale agriculture growing their own food with a small surplus of cash crops for sale. The most important crops are maize, tobacco, cotton, groundnuts, manioc, vegetables, and rice. The basic problem is to increase farming efficiency and productivity so that more people can enjoy a cash economy.

The government has, therefore, placed agriculture in the foremost rank of its ambitious programme of development. There are good prospects for Turkish tobacco and coffee and small holders are encouraged to produce tea, and flue-cured tobacco. A new sugar production project is planned for the Shire Valley area, in the southern region.

Practical steps teach the growers how to prevent erosion and to adopt improved cultural practices, including the use of better seed and of fertilizer. It is possible to double average yields per acre of maize and of other crops, provided right methods are applied at the right time. The Farmers Marketing Board purchases all market produce.

On the national level, four Farm Institutes, three newly-built, provide courses for farmers. A new Agricultural College being built at Bunda, near Lilongwe, will soon be integrated into the University of Malawi.

The most noteworthy achievement in this field is the new orientation given to the Young Pioneers of the Congress Party. Members of this movement initially created for military and security motives, is presently steering its members towards agricultural development.

Translated from *Vivante Afrique*

You are my cleansing Sea, Draw me to You.

Friendship With Christ

As far as religious matters are concerned, Ascola is a waste land. It requires a good dose of courage and perseverance on the part of the missionaries to quicken interest in things of the soul among a population fallen a prey to indifferentism.

My task here consists in teaching catechetics, in close collaboration with the Fathers of the Pont Viau Foreign Missions. Right from the start, several teams of Peruvian youths were organized to help with the work, but lack of adequate training and of physical endurance soon caused them to give up. Nonetheless, the undertaking has known a good measure of success, thanks to the Holy Spirit who breathes wherever He wills.

At the beginning of the year, Reverend Gerald Tessier, P.M.E., planned the organization of a

catechumenate to prepare a number of children and adolescents in our parish for baptism. As a rule, the parents have their little ones baptized in infancy, but some neglect to do so. This explains how children of seven or over come to ask, on their own initiative, to be baptized. Starting from February, these catechumens met once a week at the parish hall for doctrinal instruction.

At the opening session, I made acquaintance with Manuel, Santiago, Firmin, Felipe, Ana Maria, Teresa, Mila whose ages ranged from fifteen to

twenty. The rollcall revealed that seven of the fifteen who had registered were missing.

The lessons opened with the singing, upon my request, of the song *Llaga*, composed by Reverend Father Alejandro, a great favourite with Peruvian adolescents. *Llaga* may be translated as "wound". This song would have but slight if any appeal for Canadian youth. Here, on the contrary, the young seem to appreciate its spiritual overtones. In case you are interested, the following is a free translation of a few stanzas:

I'm looking	I feel
For I don't know what;	Blue. Why? I don't know.
I think it's a face	Something seems missing,
I once saw, then lost.	Ever since I can remember.

Wound, ever bleeding wound!	Name,
I feel empty and lost,	I don't know your name,
I feel sore all over.	But I feel you're looking
I'll feel better only	at me.
Once I see You.	

Wound, ever bleeding wound!
I feel empty and lost.
I feel like a muddied river,
And You are my cleansing Sea.
Draw me to You.

Brother Raymond Gaudet, director of the team.



Ceremony prior to baptism.

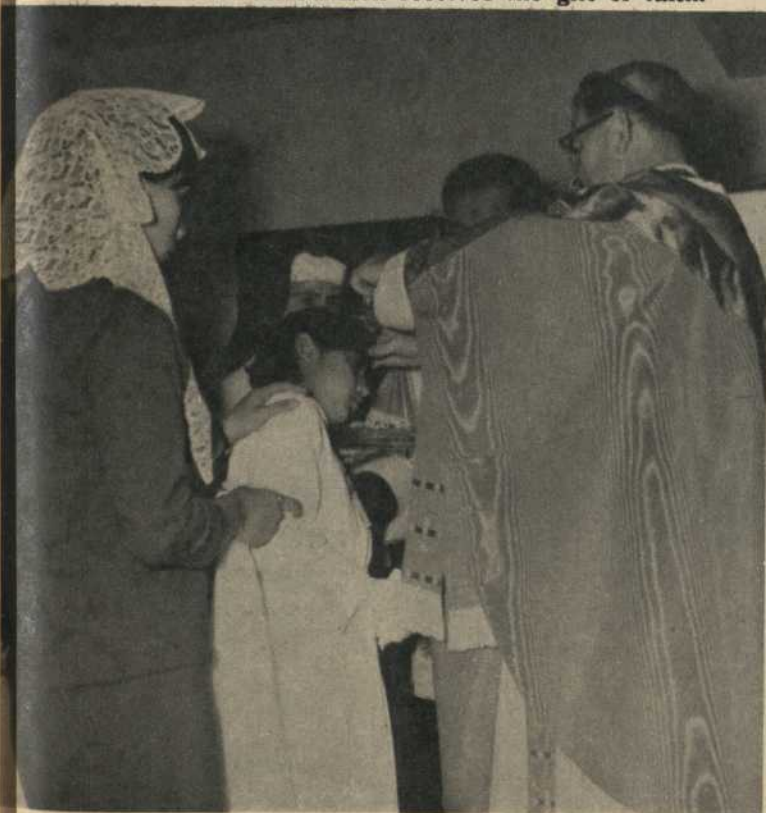


I enjoyed every single minute of those doctrinal lessons, as my students always proved in a receptive mood. For the majority, this was the first time they had ever been told about God, their immortal soul, friendship with the Saviour. Their hearts opened up to Truth like rosebuds opening to God's sunshine.

Lately, Ana Maria confided to me "Sister, now that I understand more clearly what conscience means, there are many things I'm going to avoid." Everybody notices how well-behaved the little madcap has become!

In the final stages of the course, the catechumens learned about the serious obligations involved in getting baptized. Baptism is only the first step on the way to God. All must want to grow to the full stature of Christ as Saint Paul says in his epistles. Friendship with Christ is the truest of all friendships; through it, the baptized are transformed into the likeness of the Beloved.

The catechumen receives the gift of faith.



Godparents and teacher proudly stand beside godchild.

I found audio-visual helps of the utmost importance in teaching catechetics to my South American pupils. How much they appreciated the coloured slides, and enjoyed listening to recorded Bible texts! The slides emphasized the grandeur and beauty of Christlike living. Besides, they showed how vigilant one must be to preserve one's precious friendship with the Saviour.

Brother R. Gaudet, F.S.C., often dropped in to help. He liked to improvise Bible Services on themes such as light, for instance. Lighted candle in hand he went from one group to the other, communicating its bright flame. Starting with the teaching team, he passed on to the catechumens who also must have at heart the desire to spread the truth. All other lights in the room were put out so that the light of the candles illumined it, little by little: "Through darkness to light" a symbol of what happens within the soul of the catechumen when he receives the sacrament of regeneration. Child of light, the Christian must be like a beacon on a stormy sea, guiding men to safety.

Recorded Biblical commentaries recalled three works of God: creation, the passage of the Red Sea, the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. Whenever the Church pours the waters of baptism, it is one with Christ, united to Him in prayer upon the banks of the river Jordan. The baptized then becomes the child of God; he belongs to the family of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

On the second Sunday of the Passion, the catechumens were invited to attend the evening Mass and, before all those present, to make their profession of faith. After the recitation of the Credo, their names were entered on parochial records.

The longed-for day dawned at last for the whole class. In the late afternoon, on Holy Saturday, the pastor, Reverend Gérard Ouellette, P.M.E., administered the sacrament of baptism to fifteen catechumens. Parents were deeply impressed when they saw their children surrounded by godfathers and godmothers, being officially received into the bosom of the Church.

We teachers also felt a strong pulling at our heartstrings, especially when tall fifteen-year old Felipe, thirteen-year old Maria, and eleven-year old Rosita, members of one family, drew up to be made children of God while their parents happily looked on. From our hearts rose a silent prayer: "Dear Lord, grant us, Christians, to feel the anxiety of the non-baptized; to feel it so deeply that we may find practical means of helping them. Grant that these children who are today becoming sons and daughters of the great family of the Church may in turn lead many others to You."

Afterwards, we all sang in unison with the neophytes:

Our Lord, one Faith,
One baptism, one God, our Father.

When the religious part of the ceremony was over, parents, teachers, friends, and newly-baptized, assembled in the parochial hall where refreshments were served and small gifts offered to the new members of the parochial family. Before leaving, the parents thanked us profusely for teaching their children the most important science of all.

For our part, we thanked God for the privilege granted us to lead these lambs to His Fold, who might otherwise have strayed.

Françoise Philie, M.I.C.



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WEST INDIES

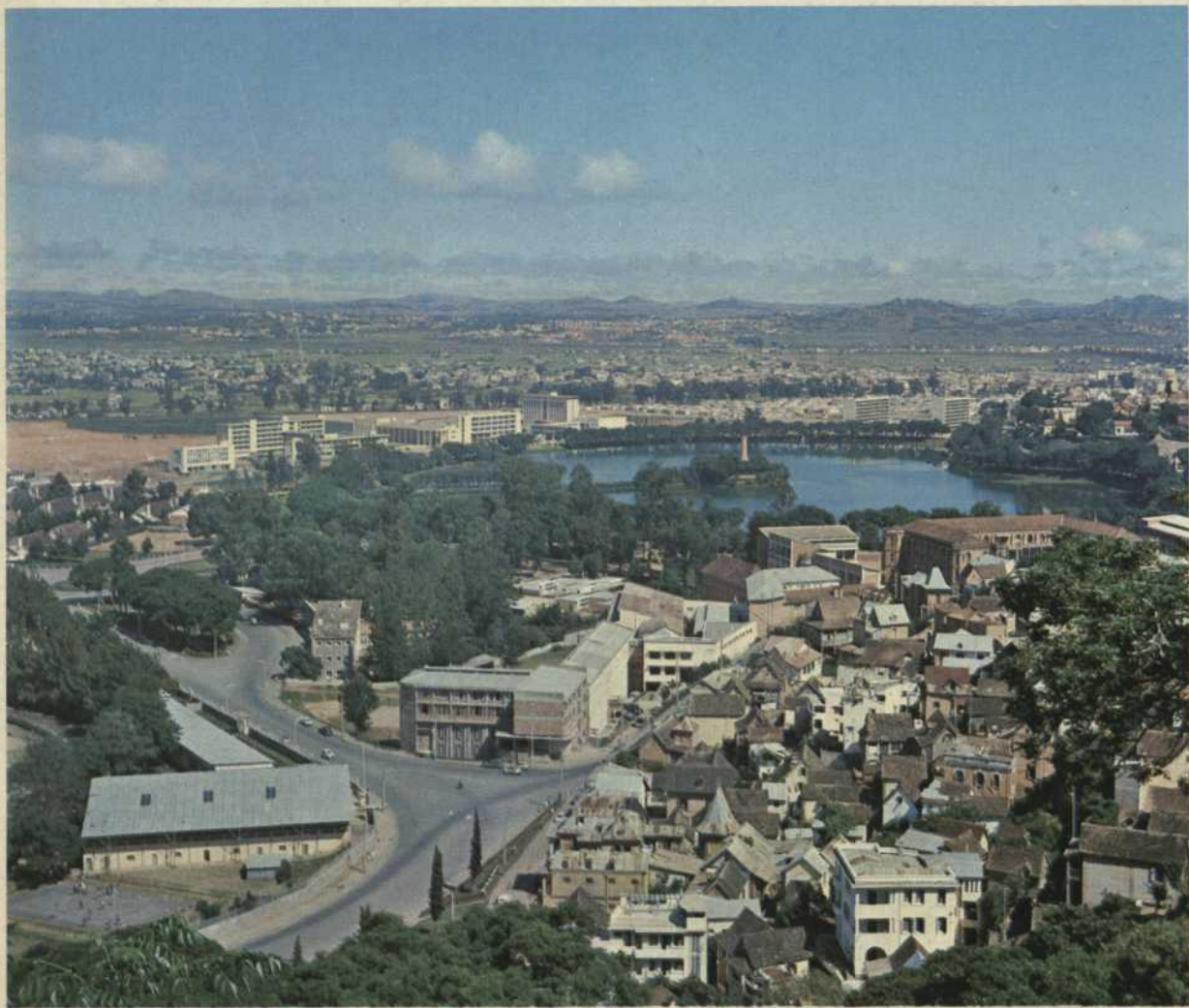
LES CAYES, Haiti
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MZAMBAZI, St. John's Parish, Eutini P.O., Malawi
RUMPI, St. Patrick's Parish, Rumpi P.O., Malawi
KARONGA, St. Mary's Parish, Karonga P.O., Malawi
KASEYE, St. Michael's Parish, Chitipa P.O. Box 100, Malawi
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MZUZU, Mzuzu P.O. Box 24, Malawi
MZIMBA, St. Paul's Parish, Mzimba P.O., Malawi
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CIKUNGU, Kazimuli P.O., Zambia

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Bird's-eye view
of modern Ta-
nanarivo.

Photo: Sister Thérèse Gendron, M.I.C.