

# THE PRECURSOR

July-August 1966

*“On all the laity falls the glorious burden of toiling to bring the divine offer of salvation ever more and more into the reach of all men of all times and all over the world. They must have every path opened to their wholehearted personal participation as their strength and the needs of the time allow, in the saving work of the Church.”*

— Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution  
*De Ecclesia.*

OUR COVER:

Musical break at Marymount Secondary School, Mzuzu, Malawi. Sister Françoise Sauzier performs on the accordion.

# THE PRECURSOR

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Old Maya temple, overgrown with vegetation, in the forests of Yucatan.



# THE MAYA RELIGION PAST AND PRESENT

by Sister Gabrielle Ouimet, M.I.C.

## SECOND PART : TODAY

### *Synthesis of Maya religion*

Before going on to the second part of this article, I will resume the history of Maya religion in order to give a rough estimate of this religion and to stress its evolution. Sylvanus Griswold Morley's book *The Ancient Maya* will serve as guide. The origin of the Maya people as well as that of their religion remains obscure. Morley offers the following explanations: it appears that the Maya religion consisted at first in the adoration of natural elements. This form of worship did not call for ceremonies, priests, temples. During the age of agriculture, religion gradually became an organized whole with priests and temples, ceremonies and rites. Between the introduction of agriculture and the invention of the Maya calendar, no practical modifications took place.

From the fourth century of the Christian era, the Maya clergy developed a religious philosophy of life. Deities of the sky, of time periods, and of numbers became predominant. It seems that Maya religion was not then marred by blood and human sacrifices, although there are authors who believe that the Mayas practised such sacrifices from the very beginnings of their history.

We have no archeological proof that the Maya religion underwent considerable alterations during the Classic Period, but the Mexican invasion brought about remarkable innovations. For his part, Morley affirms that the bloody character of the Maya religion such as it existed at the time of the Spanish conquest was due to Mexican influences and had been introduced into Yucatan by Mexican invaders in the tenth century of the Christian era. Mexican religion was clearly less sacerdotal than the Maya. Warriors as providers of "selected ones" shared with the priests intimacy with the gods. No longer could the latter pose as sole mediators between divinity and man. Finally, Morley points out that even after a certain conversion to Christianity the people still clung to their ancient creed.



These Maya ruins in Zaculeu (now Huehuetenango) resume the old Maya religion: left, temple of the moon; centre, temple of the sun; right, temple of the star.

Village street in Peten where time seems to stand still.

Map of Maya territory at the time of conquest. It comprised Yucatan, Campeche, Quintana Roo, part of Honduras, British Honduras, Guatemala, and the Mexican state of Chiapas.

Manuel Maldonado Photo



## *Conversion of Maya to Christianity*

Here we must have recourse to a flashback in order to see how the Mayas came to be converted to the Christian religion. Were there any elements in the existing Maya religion which might have facilitated the fusion of the two? Had other religions been integrated into the Maya religion? What were the obstacles to be hurdled? Finally, what is the present-day religious situation among the Mayas? These questions will be answered in the following pages.

How did it come about that the Mayas who had resisted the earlier impact of alien cults such as that of the Mexican Kukulcan accepted Christiani-

ty? Jean Babelon gives a vivid account of this in his book, *La vie des Mayas*. A brief outline will be sufficient for our purpose.

The most ancient ruins of a Christian church in America are found in Cozumel. Within its crumbling walls may still be seen the altar erected by Hernando Cortez in 1519. Catholic tradition was early introduced into Yucatan. Evangelization was conducted here at the same time although independently of the military conquest.

In 1545, The Franciscan Friars arrived in Champoton, Campeche, and Merida. The first to work there were Juan de la Puerta, Luis de la Villalpando, and Diego de Becal. Pagan temples were allotted

United Nations Photo



to them to be used as monasteries. But an important aspect of this history is the antagonism which brought into conflict friars and warriors. These dissensions unfortunately all too visible to the Indians aroused the latter's distrust of the military as well as of the ministers of the Gospel. For this reason several attempts at evangelization failed.

Conversion to Christianity was not, of course, forced on the Mayas, but apostasy was liable to be punished by death. Bishop Landa even went so far as to have the ashes of dead apostates thrown to the winds. Nevertheless, this Franciscan friar who reached Yucatan a few years after the Spanish conquest was a man of unquestionable ability. His interests were broad and considering what he had to do he was amazingly objective. Eric Thompson says of him in the work already mentioned:

He has been criticized for his severity in stamping out recrudescences of paganism, but in that he merely reflected the views of his century; namely, that the soul is more important than the body and that the ends justify the means. Who are we to criticize? We have substituted political beliefs for the soul, and retained the second view.

In 1562, he decreed that idolatry must be stamped out of Mayadom at any cost. Accordingly, he ordered an auto-da-fe of mostly all Maya manuscripts which, he states, "contained nothing in which there was not to be seen superstition and lies of the devil." This work was carried out so thoroughly that of the hundreds of "books" only three escaped the holocaust. However, we are indebted to him for a history of Yucatan which is a precious source of information on Maya customs, religious beliefs, and communal rites. Without this book, it is doubtful whether the glyph decipherment could ever have been achieved. He is the one source of the habits, virtues, and foibles of the Mayas.

### *Mostly syncretism*

Misguided zeal was the cause at this epoch of several deplorable failures in the evangelization, of the burning down of churches, of the massacre of missionaries. Even when the Indians appeared sincerely converted to Christianity, they often reverted to idolatrous practices or amalgamated the two religions to their liking. The *Chacs* or rain gods were renamed after the archangels; the moon goddess was made to represent Our Lady; saints of the Catholic Church and Maya day names shared the prayers whispered by the people before crosses set at the four world directions.

The filibuster Oexmelin who wrote the history of the buccaneers towards 1680 relates the following fact. After the Spanish conquest, the Indians of eastern Yucatan were obliged to welcome at certain times of the year a Spanish priest sent to convert them to Christianity. While this priest remained in their midst, they carefully omitted idolatrous ceremonies, but no sooner was he gone than they reverted to pagan practices. Other similar reports testify that the converted Mayas were torn between loyalty to their ancient ruling classes and fidelity to their new found faith. The Mayan attitude of live and let live, their spirit of friendly cooperation induced them to keep a foot in both camps. They accepted Christianity, although not as a substitute for their old gods. On the contrary, they blended the two religions into a smoothly functioning pantheon.

René Aigrain has summarized in one paragraph the elements which facilitated or opposed this perfect fusion.

*Confusion and superstition.* The missionaries' preaching was facilitated by the identification established between symbols of the ancient religion and the great themes of the new doctrine. Thus, the Vahomché, tree of life, (which for the Maya was the *ceiba*, wild cotton tree) arbour of a symbolical bird, was transformed into the Cross, above which was placed the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit; the statue of *Ixazaluoh*, mother to Itzamna, depicted holding her child in her arms, for the Mother of Christ... Such adaptations which at first served the purpose of the missionaries, were not without presenting drawbacks. They favoured a syncretism which encumbered religion, no matter how sincere, with numerous superstitions: remnants of idols neighbouring with crucifixes; a mixture now naive, now disquieting of sincere Catholic faith and of fidelity to a vague pagan creed which four centuries of Christianity have been powerless to erase.

Were other religions ever integrated into the Maya religion? We find interesting notes on this subject in a monograph on the industrialization of Cantel, Guatemala, wherein the author devotes a whole chapter on the practices and beliefs of the people. This account allows us to appreciate clearly the present day status of the Maya religion not merely in Cantel but in the Maya milieu as a whole.

The chapter is divided into three sections: (1) the Christian experiment; (2) the so-called folk-Catholicism; (3) esoteric beliefs.

1 - The Christian experiment. In Cantel the Catholic religion takes precedence. It is represented by the pastor who has been living here for over

two years. One curate and several lay assistants conduct two organizations and attend to multiple parochial duties. The bishop of Quetzaltenango

Preparing "tortillas", flat unleavened cakes of maize, baked on heated iron or stones.



United Nations Photo



Church built in the Spanish architectural style of the 16th century, Campeche.

makes periodic visitations throughout his diocese. Outside of the ceremonies marking baptism, marriage, funerals, religious life does not play an important role in Cantel.

In addition to the Catholic Church, there are four Protestant Churches. Of these sects, three have been imported from North America and one

has originated in Guatemala: Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, and Gramarista. The Presbyterian Church is the only one with a resident pastor; the others depend on the good offices of ministers from neighbouring towns. Nobody knows exactly how many people belong to these sects as the people transfer from one church to the other as they fancy. The author goes on to say, "The



The basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico, recalls the Blessed Virgin's apparition to the Indian Juan Diego.

Canadian Pacific Photos.

striking difference existing between the Catholic Church and the Protestant sects naturally consists in the doctrine of free admittance to one church or the other."

2 - "Folk-Catholicism" is defined by the author as follows: "By Popular Catholicism is meant those aspects of religious beliefs and practices which

co-exist with the dogmas and rites of the Catholic Church. In a word, Mexican religions were integrated with an imported Catholicism tinged with syncretism and expressed in popular local customs.

3 - Esoteric beliefs. Mr. Nash gives the following explanation of the third division: esoteric doctrines are based on the ancient divinatory calendar



United Nations Photo

A typical case of syncretism of the old Maya religion and of Christianity: incense is burnt on church steps in honour of pagan gods.

of 260 days. Adepts of these esoteric beliefs are of two classes: the sorcerers who practise hoodoo, and soothsayers who prophesy and cure the sick... Pictures of *San Simon* or of *Judas* are sometimes used in these practices.

This concrete example of the present-day situation among the Mayas proves once again that the ancient gods and the Christian saints have been welded into a unit having the Christian God at its head. In certain regions, a difference of functions between saints and pagan divinities continues to be stressed, the former being assigned the government of cities and the latter reigning over the forests, the cornfields, and the county folk. Nevertheless, very few among the Mayas would be capable of marking differences between the Christian and the pagan elements of their religion. Indeed, they would protest indignantly if they were charged with being still partially pagan.

Christianity then has not completely triumphed in Mayadom and the old religion, discarded in its essential aspects, has not totally disappeared.

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# TECUN UMAN

Condensed from the essay "Tecun Uman, Defender of our Liberty", by Maria Albertina Galvez.<sup>1</sup>

The dominant event in our history doubtless is the conquest, in 1524, of the kingdoms of Guatemala by Captain Pedro de Alvarado nicknamed by the Indians Tomatiuh, child of the sun, because of his handsome figure.

Upon their arrival, the Spanish invaders found the remains of what was perhaps one of the world's most amazing civilizations, a civilization remarkable by the political and social organization which governed the Maya Quiche. This people held up as a model by certain sociologists and jurists, lived under an aristocratic monarchy. At the head of the Maya city-state stood the *halach uinic*. He was the *man*, the *real man*, the *true man*, endowed with plenary powers and restrained only by a council of nobles presumably related to him by close blood ties.

The invasion of the land by foreign troops wounded the pride of our ancestors, instigating a chain reaction of bitterness and resentment. They fought courageously to defend their rights as citizens, for they were fiercely proud of the beautiful land of their birth, the Land of the Turkey and the Deer.

Troubled by the frequent incursions of *cacchi-queles*, the peaceful existence of the aborigines was shattered when the great Mexican city of Tenochtitlan was attacked by the *conquistadores* in 1519. Emperor Moctezuma, called Heavenly Arrow, dispatched swift messengers to the Quiche kings, warning them of the invasion of his territory by an army of white men. This dire news caused the demise of the old king, Quicab Tanub, known as Quicab the Great. The author of *Danse de la Conquête* depicts this noble figure in a historical study where-

in Tecun Uman plays the chief role. From this book I have borrowed the following significant dialogue similar to a ballad:

Come, my children, rise!  
Why so sad and wan?  
Let not heaven offence  
Take at my temerity.  
Listen to me,  
Who am cruelly afflicted.

Moctezuma, great emperor  
Of Mexico land  
Thus writes in his own hand:

"Don Quicab, my star  
Has set.  
A foreign king  
My realm has conquered;  
Alas, how sad my lot!

"This king on conquest bent  
Wants to make you slaves,  
To gather spoils, the thief!  
His warriors are clever,  
The art of war is theirs.  
Their thunder blasts,  
Their fire reduces to ashes.

"Strong and disciplined,  
His warriors  
Easily conquered mine.

"They are brave and bold.  
Their God is powerful.  
All this, my children,  
Weighs me down with woe.  
My heart is broken,  
All the day I mourn and weep."

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Spanish. Coll. Minima



Lake Atitlan. Quiche women carry water as in the days of Tecun Uman.

Canadian Pacific Photos



Awesome beauty of Quiche land. Poliman Volcano belches white smoke above Lake Atitlan.

A profound unrest spread among the peaceful inhabitants who saw their liberty and their independence threatened by strangers. Then it was that the noble Quiche people rose as one man, ready to defend their rights and their inheritance.

Earth, sea, and volcanoes throbbed; days grew dark; faces reflected anguish and determination. The death of Quicab the Great brought about a change of government. Tecun Uman, tall and dignified of bearing, noble of heart, and keen of mind, was elected *Nim chojoj-Cawek*, Great One of the House of Cawek, a function similar to that of our modern Minister of National Defence.

War whoops echoed from mountain and valley; the clash of cymbals and the throbbing of drums announced the opening of hostilities. Messengers fairly flew over the roads carrying important military orders from one end of the kingdom to another. Axes and silexes were sharpened; arrows whizzed through the air; ways of communication were severed by road blocks; round shields and bludgeons were distributed to all men of age to bear arms.

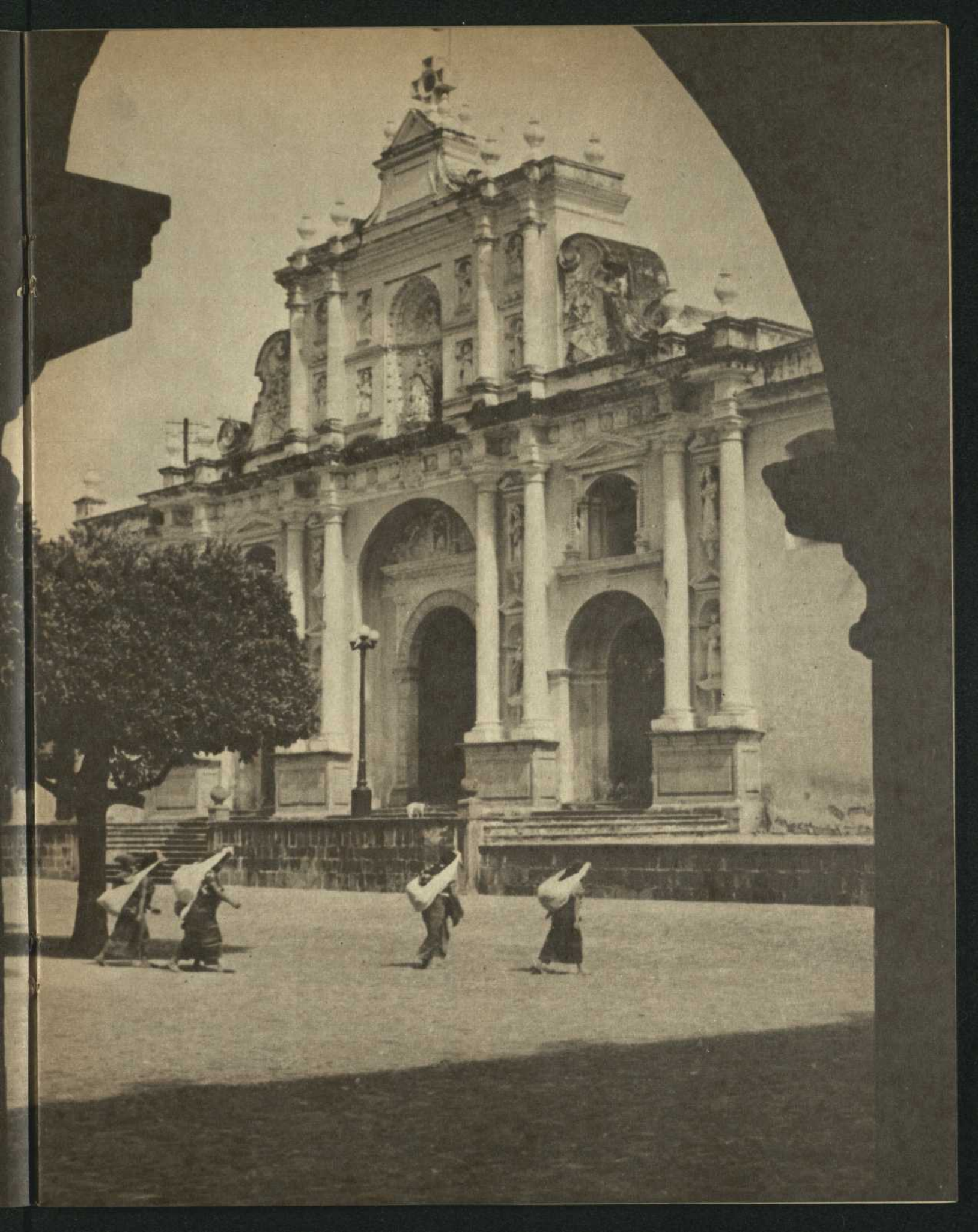
According to Hernando Cortes, Captain Pedro de Alvarado left Mexico December 6, 1523, accompanied by 300 cavalry men, crossbow men, and mercenaries armed with fowling pieces. The latter



Flute player, and drummer boy at entrance of church, Patzum, Guatemala. Finely checkered aprons mark them as Quiche.

The splendid cathedral of Antigua. At the death of Tecun Uman, last Quiche ruler, Christianity had already spread through the land thanks to the Spaniards.

Canadian Pacific Photos



were nearly all Tlascalteras Indians. Accompanying the war party were numerous porters leading 40 relay horses with 4 cannons or rather stone-throwers and a quantity of weapons in tow. The first halt was called after the entire company had come across the isthmus of Tehuantepec, camps being set up in Chiapas and Soconusco.

Horses neighed and swords flashed. The dusky faces of the Tlascalteras mulattos contrasted strongly with those of the Spaniards. They went ahead of the warriors, breaking through the blocked roads. The stage was set for a furious combat. Mounted on a spirited horse and followed by Captain Hernando Chavez and Pedro Portocarrera, Don Pedro de Alvarado gave the fateful order to fire. Cannons and fowling pieces began to belch death into the ranks of the Quiche.

Then came February 1524. King Tecun, a bold warrior, had donned his most splendid apparel; on his head shone the regal crown; his dress was resplendent with the emerald feathers of the quetzal. In his right hand he grasped an arrow while in his left he carried the roundel, insignia of his royalty.

Nonchalantly the *conquistadores* rode forward. What had they to fear from practically defenceless Indians? Meantime in the city of Cumarcaah, capital of the Quiche kingdom, an army of courageous citizens was preparing to fight to the bitter end in order to safeguard the independence of their nation.

Units of hardy warriors guarded all the roads and ditches surrounding the royal city. Alas! They had reckoned without the fire-belching weapons of the Spaniards which they had never seen. The roar of the cannons, and the size of the horses stupefied the Indians who had never before experienced this sort of warfare.

Alvarado had gained experience while harassing American colonists, but the Quiche had never measured themselves against a foreign foe. Nonetheless, the sight of the advancing army drove them to acts of almost superhuman bravery, as led by their hero Tecun Uman they defended the entrance to their capital foot by foot. But, they were powerless to halt the onward march of the conqueror.

After their first victory, the Spaniards put up their camp in Quezaltenango, in the spacious valley of Urbina watered by a clear brook. Ricardo Castaneda Paganini mentions in his work on Tecun Uman the first meeting between the Quiche Maya and Alvarado's troops: "Don Pedro kept on ad-

vancing into the interior, being headed for the province of Xetulul. The first battle between the Spanish troops and the Indian tribes took place on the banks of the Tilapa River, the second beside the Samala. The victorious Spanish army then marched on Tzakaha. By dint of forced marches and in the face of great difficulties, they proceeded up the sheer slopes of the volcano now known as Santa Maria de Jesus. They were forced to pitch camp for the night close to its summit. The next day, they converged on Xelaluh and pressed forward into the plain of Olinztepec where flows the Samala.

\* \* \*

The Quiche army organized by Tecun Uman considered him as the "general captain of all the earth." Uman was not his real name; the Quiche term *uman* signifies a mature, important man.

In a relation written by a Dominican friar wherein the final engagement is described, we are told Tecun Uman was at the head of an army of 62,000 men. Among his staff of valiant officers were General Ahzumanche, his aide-de-camp Ahzol, his mace-bearer Ahbocob... Borne on a magnificent litter by the nobles of his kingdom, Tecun arrived in Totonicapan where 90,000 warriors in battle array awaited him. He then left for Quetzaltenango where other battalions swelled the ranks of his army which finally numbered about 232,000 strong.

These troops the great general spread out in different outposts so as to cover the whole territory, extending from Quetzaltenango to the province of Suchitepequez.

An anonymous chronicler relates: "King Tecun Uman was a great magician who under the shape of a quetzal adorned with extraordinarily large and brilliant plumes flew above his armies, wielding an emerald sceptre, giving orders to officers and warriors.

"The battle was launched. Their courage keyed up to frenzy, the Indians attacked from both sides at once. However, the Spanish cavalry which had the advantage drove into the serried ranks of the Indian army, then swept round and attacked the élite of Tecun Uman's bodyguard. The battle raged for hours. Although harassed by Quiche troops, the Spaniards slowly gained ground, killing hundreds of Indians. Fired with the desire of crushing the invaders, King Tecun then began to fly over his troops, transformed into an eagle with the feathers of a quetzal. Armed with a silex dagger, he boldly attacked Alvarado but only succeeded in wounding his horse.



Handsome representatives of the Quiche-Maya nations, Antigua.

Canadian Pacific Photo

"Alvarado having jumped on another mount, Tecun attacked him again twice. Finally, the *conquistador* mortally wounded the king with an arrow. Falling from his horse headlong, Tecun Uman died gloriously on the plain of Quetzaltenango."

This historical relation although mixed with legendary exploits proves beyond doubt the existence of Tecun Uman.

According to tradition, the hero died February 20, 1524. He was not yet fifty. When news of his death reached his wife, a princess lately baptized under the name of Maria, she fled into mountain recesses where she died of hunger at the foot of a lordly peak called today Maria Tecun. The Indians say that on every full moon the queen returns to grace the peak with a silvery halo. There they still pay her homage with secret Quiche rites.

The remains of Tecun Uman were respectfully buried by his faithful subjects in a hidden spot now called Tecun Hill. Ever since, the region has been filled with the nests of quetzal sporting crimson breast feathers.

The other Quiche kings resolved to take revenge by burning to the ground the city of Cumarcaah but they were betrayed before they could realize their plan. All of them were condemned by the Spaniards to be burned alive and the members of their families imprisoned.

Supported by Juan Cortez, Don Juan Rojas, son of Tecun and baptized a Catholic like his mother, governed his people for a short period, subject to Spanish domination. With him died out the Quiche monarchy which had reigned for thirteen generations.



by Sister Marie Annette, M.I.C.<sup>1</sup>

A few months ago, Sister Gisèle Picard, Sister Marguerite Simard and I arrived in this mining region often nicknamed the "brook where tin flows". At present, our *convento* consists of three rooms in an apartment shared with several families. The courtyard is the common meeting place where water is drawn everyday, happenings discussed, and civilities exchanged. Right across the street, stands the mining centre's hospital, where Sister Superior spends part of the day helping with the patients, while I visit the families and Sister Marguerite Simard conducts classes in catechetics and church singing.

From a geographical, sociological, and missionary point of view, Catavi presents numerous interesting peculiarities.

### **Geographical level**

Surrounded by frowning, denuded mountains, our little town might wear an austere mask were it not for the brilliant sunshine which lends a note of gaiety to its narrow climbing streets and drab buildings. Catavi has been built on four separate levels.

In a deep ravine at the foot of steep hills lies the lowest level the Rio Janeiro *barriada*. Here dwell Cholos (half-breed) who have great difficulty in making both ends meet.

On the second level is found the business centre with its offices, workshops, factories, and market. It is the most animated section of Catavi.

The parochial centre, the military barracks, and other official buildings are situated on the third level. Our *convento* standing midway between the first and second level, affords a fine view of that part of the town which sprawls below.

By far the greater bulk of the population live on the fourth and highest level, in houses which can be differentiated only by their numbers. No coquetry of architecture wasted here!

People with bad heart conditions had better not



The COMIBOL hospital where Sister Gisèle Picard visits patients everyday.



Catavi market.

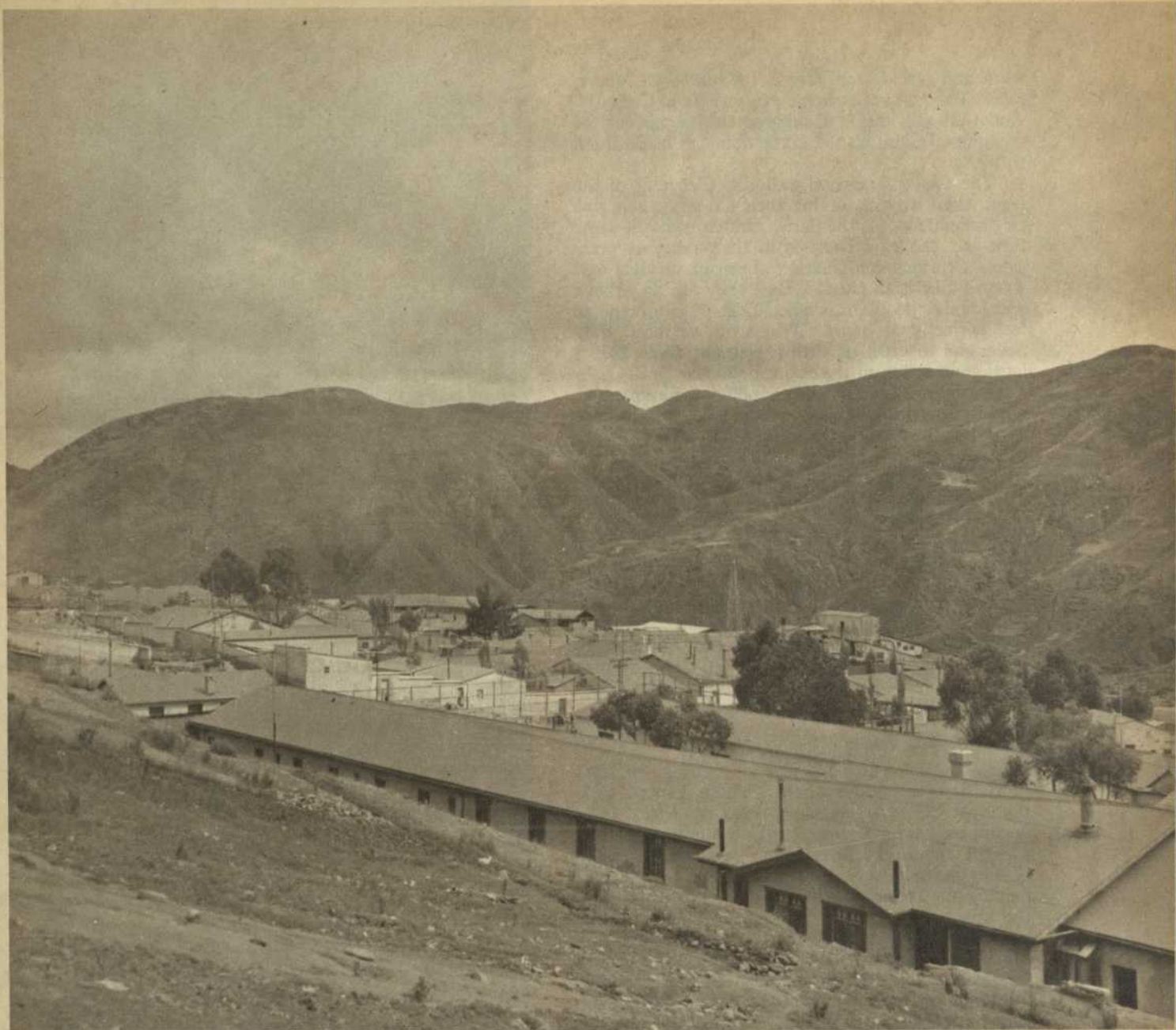
Canadian Pacific Photos

live in Catavi. There are too many stairs to climb from ground floor to top floor. Fortunately, climbing does not seem to bother the inhabitants.

### ***Sociological level***

Two classes of people live in this town: middle class Bolivians among whom are the engineers and

officials who staff the *Comibol* (Bolivian Mining Company); Indians and *Cholos* who work the mines. The latter's standard of living is very simple and frugal. Quechua, a local dialect we will have to learn, is generally spoken here by both Indians and *Cholos*. Women wear the colourful national costume — bellying skirts of pink and green, mauve and blue with embroidered shawls of contrasting



One of the "barriada" levels on the mountain side.

colours. Typical ancient customs still adhered to, recall the civilization of past ages.

We feel happy in sharing the life of the people among whom we are called upon to work. Our three small rooms are as crudely furnished as theirs and boast of no modern gadgets. We utilize the common spigot installed outside in the yard where

neighbours come for their water. Co-existence with rats and mice forms part of our adaptation to our milieu. A few days after our arrival in Catavi, I had to call in a carpenter to repair broken planks in the flooring where my weight had proved too much for it. Thinking this a good opportunity to have the rat holes attended to, I asked him to plug all those I pointed out. He looked up from his

work and placidly answered, " *No importa, Madrecita*. The rats are at home everywhere in Catavi!" And that was that! I suppose this is part of the meaning of Saint Paul's injunction " to be all in all to all."

The *Cholos'* ancestral customs, their cult of the dead, their way of serving their Creator often give us distractions, for the parish church is at the same time our chapel. There is in their religious practices, a curious combination of pagan survival and warped Christian ritual. But, they are an urbane and lovable people in whose midst we are made to feel perfectly at home. Whenever we meet, they never fail to greet us with a pleasant *Buen Dia*, a local contraction of the Spanish *Buenos Dias*.

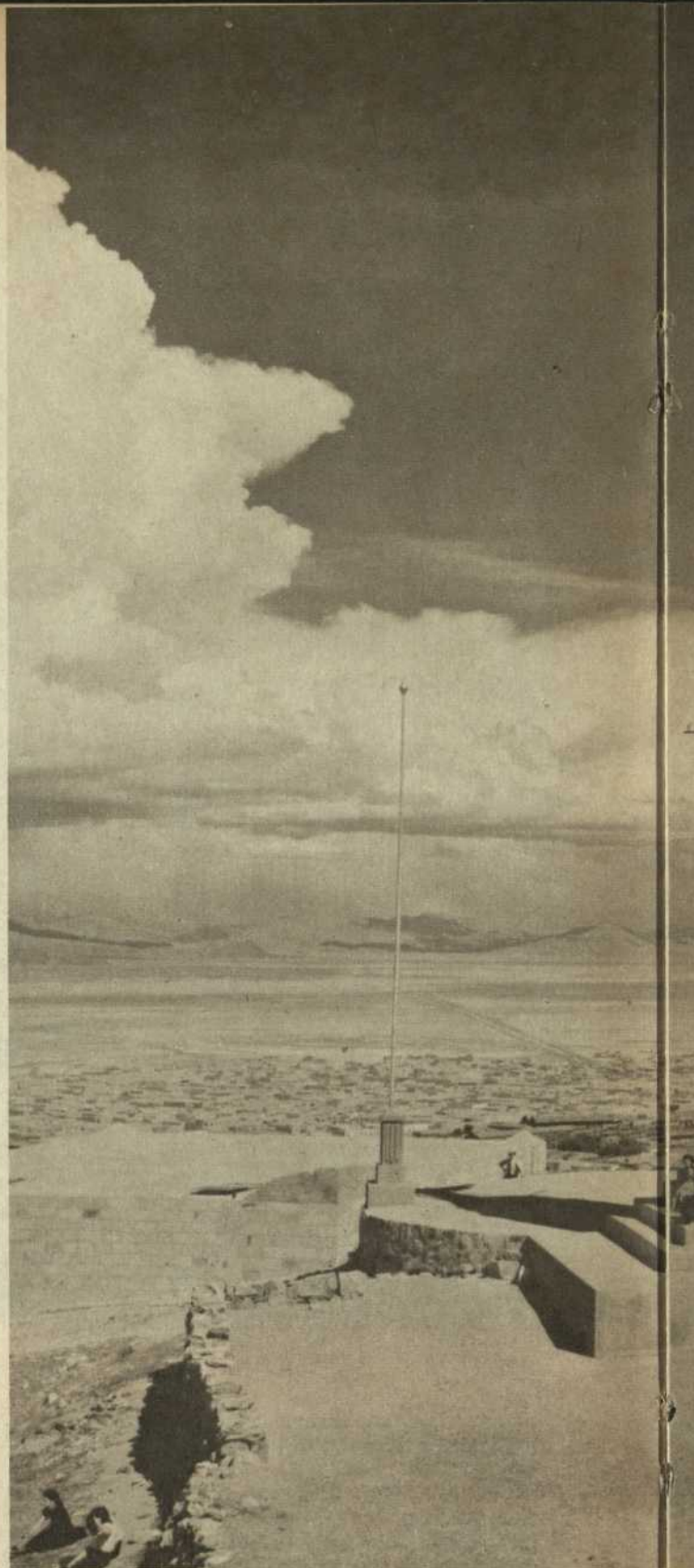
As for the Indians, we cannot but admire their inherited traditions of discipline, toil, and patience as well as their skill in various handicrafts. Watching them at work in their hard labour of the mines we easily concur in the opinion of a learned author on the subject of the Indians, " There is no other race capable of such sustained toil on so little sustenance ".

It is difficult to obtain exact estimates of the population rate in this region. Sporadic statistics for a few urban centres only have been guaranteed, but it is generally recognized that in the native quarters, even of towns, no means exist for accurate registration of births and deaths. In Catavi, moreover, the miners are often called upon to move elsewhere as the mining company decides.

### *Missionary level*

We missionaries need fear no shortage of spiritual " mining " around here. There is more work than we can ever manage, being so few. As a beginning, we have started with the hospital which is right across the street from our house. Sister Gisèle Picard spends the greater part of the day making the rounds of the patients and supervising the linen room. Sister Marguerite Simard and I lend her a hand whenever we have time left over from our own Catholic Action activities and the formation of catechists. In this, it is our privilege to collaborate with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who have been in charge of this centre for many years. Among other missionary achievements, they have initiated the Christian Family Movement and the *Cursillos de Cristiandad*, veritable school of brotherhood and apostolate and excellent means of spiritual renewal.

Already we are deeply attached to our new mission of Catavi. We want to encourage its population to live up to Christian ideals by identifying ourselves with its hopes and struggles. Thus we will bear witness to Christ in their midst as the Church requires of her apostolic labourers in the field.



This statue of the Sacred Heart towers above Oruro,

# TWO WEEKS IN CATAVI

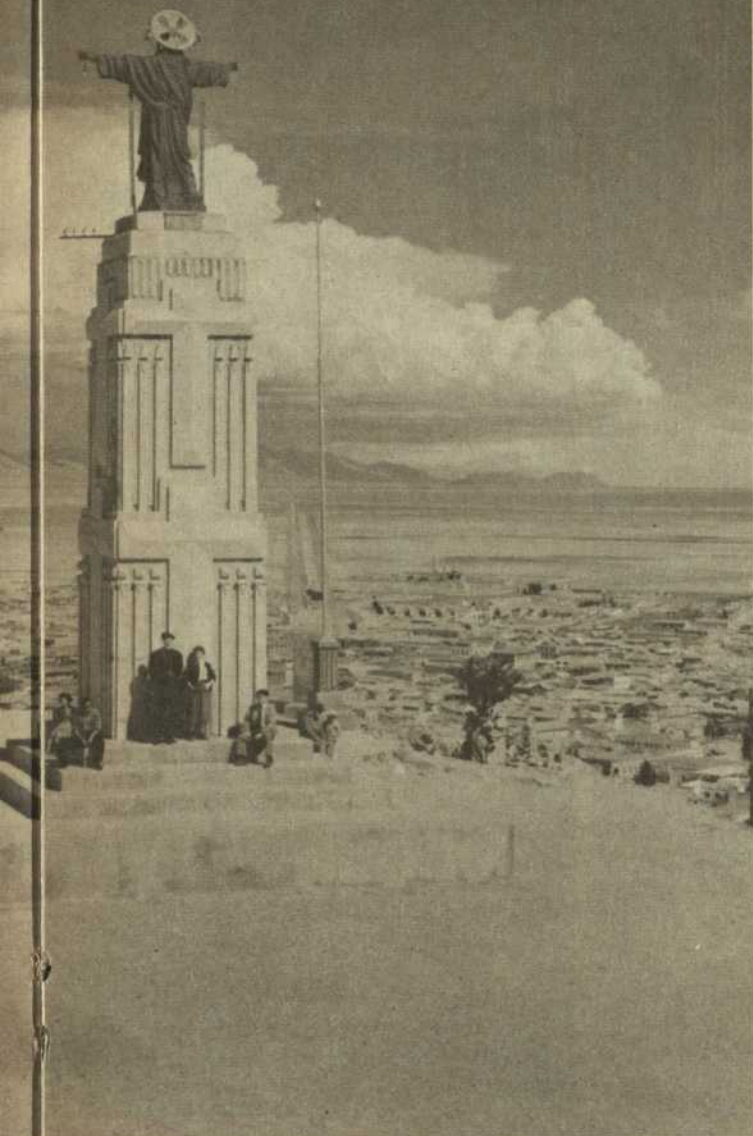
by Sister Simone Sabourin, M.I.C.

It was with alacrity that I accepted the invitation of Sister Gisèle Picard, superior of our Catavi mission, to spend a fortnight with her, while her two companions, Sisters Marguerite Simard and Marie Annette, went to Cochabamba to attend religious instruction courses.

I had had some more or less interesting experience while passing through the Oruro region some time last year, so this once I bought my ticket for Catavi a whole week in advance.

On the day agreed upon for the departure, I went to the bus station good and early. Already passengers were converging on a large streamlined bus. I followed them, stepped in, and dropped down in the No 1 seat as indicated on my ticket. No sooner had I made myself comfortable however than a portly gentleman got in and remarked that this was the seat indicated on *his* ticket. A girl who sat close by, nudged me after a glance at my ticket, "Madre", she whispered, "I think you are on the wrong bus." Much to my confusion I realized that I was indeed in the La Paz-Cochabamba car. Out I stumbled and climbed into a smaller vehicle marked Oruro, where I settled down in the right No 1.

With luck we might expect to reach Oruro by noon. We were making fairly good time, when suddenly our conveyance stalled. The driver announced that the road ahead was blocked by a bus which had developed mechanical trouble. As this is a one-way route, there was no alternative but to wait. Placidly accepting the delay, the passengers piled outside for a few breaths of fresh air. I followed them as they stood in little groups around the stalled car. Reparations were going at what seemed to me a desperately slow pace. But, nobody



heart of mining district.

Canadian Pacific Photo



Reverend Guy Brault proudly shows church "bell"  
to Sisters Gisèle Picard and Simone Sabourin.



Lake Tranque, flashing jewel  
in denuded mountain setting.



Llallagua municipal plaza.

showed the least impatience, so I curbed my fiery Canadian temperament and smilingly adapted myself to my milieu.

At long last, after three hours of delay, we were on our way to Oruro once again, the broken-down vehicle having been pushed to one side of the road. The stranded passengers gaily waved to us as we drove past. They would have to wait for another car coming from La Paz to pick them up. At what time would they reach Cochabamba? I could not help wondering.

Our own vehicle picked up speed, the driver being intent on making up for lost time. The passengers were strangely hushed; they probably had exhausted their subjects of conversation during the long hours of waiting on the mountainside. All around, the landscape presented a chaos of magnificence and beauty such as no other mountains scenery in the world can show. I felt like the "blessed damozel", not leaning out from the "golden bar of heaven" but peering out at its vestibule!

We reached Oruro at 3:00 p.m., not so very late after all. In front of the station were lined up several *colectivos*, a sort of station wagon, which ply between the town and the mining centres. I located one driver and was assured I could ride in his conveyance. "How soon?" I naively asked. He scratched his head, and nonchalantly replied, "Oh, in about half an hour, Madre." These *colectivos*, I learned, run on no definite schedule. Everything depends on the time it takes to round out the quota of passengers... The half hour stretched into two hours; at last the driver honked his horn and we started on the last lap of our joy ride, packed as compactly as sardines in a can. Impossible to budge without jostling your closest neighbours. To add to the diversion, the road was a nightmare of ruts, boulders, and washouts. It took us four endless hours to arrive in Catavi.

Sister Gisèle Picard had come out to meet me and take me home. The sight of her smiling face and the warmth of her welcome made me forget in a moment that I was dead tired.

Our missionary Sisters have been in this mining centre for only three months, but they already have more work on their hands that they can manage to do.

A few days after my arrival, the *Misionera Cruzadas de la Iglesia*, a community of Bolivian Sisters,

invited us to have dinner at their convent in Uncia. Everything in this house spoke of evangelical poverty. A cursory glance at the walls and ceilings disclosed the fact that the building was anything but waterproof. We spent a few pleasant hours with these cheerful, courageous Sisters who find their greatest happiness in devoting their time and energies to the poor.

One Sunday during my stay in Catavi, I accompanied Reverend Guy Brault, O.M.I., to the outpost of Tranque. After a drive of about twenty minutes winding through steep mountain roads, we came to Lake Tranque, shimmering in the sun. Vegetation and water were painted in golden browns, delicate canary yellows, jade greens, warm russets, and royal amethysts, as if some gigantic finger had played about in rock and waves. This coloration is due to the presence of metal in surrounding soil. As we sailed across the lake, I never tired admiring the breathtaking panorama.

We landed at a spot so high in the mountain that we had to descend by the cablecar used by employees of the hydroelectric company. I dared not glance down the gorge. After crossing a long tunnel we emerged in the yard of the school where Mass was to be offered. I watched as the sacristan summoned the faithful, using as bell the half of a metal hoop used to bind the planks of a barrel together. Swung from a metal holder and struck with a metal rod it emitted a strangely penetrating and not unpleasant sound. Meantime, a good number of adults and children had assembled. The altar was made ready; nothing was missing, not even the flowers placed in cans with the food labels on. An empty ketchup bottle and a plastic pill container did duty as altar cruets. I was edified by the deeply recollected atmosphere which reigned in the assembly.

My fortnight in Catavi was all too soon past and I returned to the capital. With what enthusiasm I hailed the white-capped, majestic Andean peaks which crown La Paz with glory! "Surely this is the most beautiful spot on God's earth," I murmured to myself as the car entered the city proper.

Without knowing it then, this was my parting salute, at least for the present, to the Cordillera Real. When I reached the convent, I learned that I was being transferred to Lima. Farewell then, dear Bolivia, since this is the Master's will and... hail Peru!



HAITI

## LES CAYES MINSTRELS

by Sister Marie Thérèse Laperrière, M.I.C.

Late last year I was appointed to teach in the primary school conducted by our Sisters in Les Cayes, Haiti. This was my initial contact with the good people of the coast, a contact which brought me many a pleasant surprise.

On the first Sunday I attended Mass at Sacred Heart parish, for instance, I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the great number of men, women, and children who sang and prayed with genuine fervour, who really and truly participated in the Holy Sacrifice. It did not take me long to discover that this was due to the zeal of the pastor, an Oblate Missionary Father, Reverend Father Roland Lussier. His eighteen years of apostolate in Haiti having enabled him to understand that the

Haitians possess an inborn gift for music, rhythm, and song, he determined to make this fact work for the spiritual advancement of his faithful. One of the activities he launched, upon assuming his duties as pastor of Sacred Heart parish, was the organization of a mixed choir.

Some time ago, I had a friendly interview with several members of this choir known as the Les Cayes Minstrels. I am sure you will enjoy learning more about these twentieth century minstrels.

Q.— *Mr. Guichon, could you tell us how and when your choir started?*

A.— Five years ago, at the close of 1960 to be precise, our devoted pastor, Father Lussier, discussed

his plans for a mixed choir with some of the teachers in the Les Cayes educational establishments. All being willing to lend a hand or rather a voice, the choir made its successful début on Christmas Eve. After a while, a committee was organized with our dear friend, Mr. Gérard Chalviré, as president. It was then that we chose to be called the Les Cayes Minstrels.

Q.— *How many members are there at present?*

A.— We now number one hundred strong. However, as the majority are in the teaching profession, we lose a few every year who are assigned elsewhere. But, newly arrived teachers are always eager to join our ranks.

**Reverend Roland Lussier, pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish, Les Cayes, who launched the mixed choir.**



Q.— *Miss Fougère, may I inquire why you appear so happy to belong to the Les Cayes Minstrels?*

A.— Because I believe that music and song wield a beneficial influence over our lives.

Q.— *What is the spirit which animates the association?*

A.— Ours is above all a family spirit. We work together as brothers and sisters, intent on securing mutual understanding, solidarity, respect for the personality of others. The rules of the association emphasize order and discipline. We do not get together to gossip, but to discuss current problems with calm and serenity. Each member is free to make suggestions, to state his or her opinion.

Q.— *Mr. Guillaume, does your association have role to play in the liturgical renewal?*

A.— Certainly. Our pastor has but a word to say and we are at his disposal for the singing during liturgical offices. We rehearse a good deal before the most important feasts such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Feast of the Sacred Heart... Moreover, our choir sings with the faithful at Sunday Mass or at Benediction.

Q.— *Do you specialize in religious singing?*

A.— We are interested also in wholesome entertainment which has an important role to play in a country like ours. Already, we have staged a few theatrical performances before the general public. On our programme figure classical numbers, light comedy, interludes of Haitian dancing, and folk songs. We have received generous encouragement from a dynamic Haitian priest, Reverend J. Augustin, author of typically Haitian dances and songs. Thanks to him, we are making new discoveries in the field of our rich cultural heritage. We are dreaming great dreams for the future of Haitian music.

Occasionally, our group goes to see a particularly interesting movie. The show over, we gather at the home of one of the members to sip coffee and munch *douces* (Haitian cookies), while discussing the merits or demerits of the film. Several times a year we go on picnics organized by our devoted pastor to Camp Perrin, Cherette, Saut Mathurin, or other beauty spots which abound in the vicinity. Such outings prove an excellent means of getting to know one another better and of strengthening the bonds of brotherhood.

Q.— *Have the Les Cayes Minstrels a rallying or theme song?*



The Les Cayes Minstrels present Ghéon's "The Mystery of the Mass". Mr. René Quichon held principal role in play.



Les Cayes Minstrels' direction committee. Team is made up of dynamic lay apostles with Mr. Gerard Chalvire (first on the left) as director.



The Les Cayes Minstrels mixed choir.

A.— They have. Each gathering opens with the following chorus:

A flower in our hair,  
A song upon our lips,  
A heart merry and true...

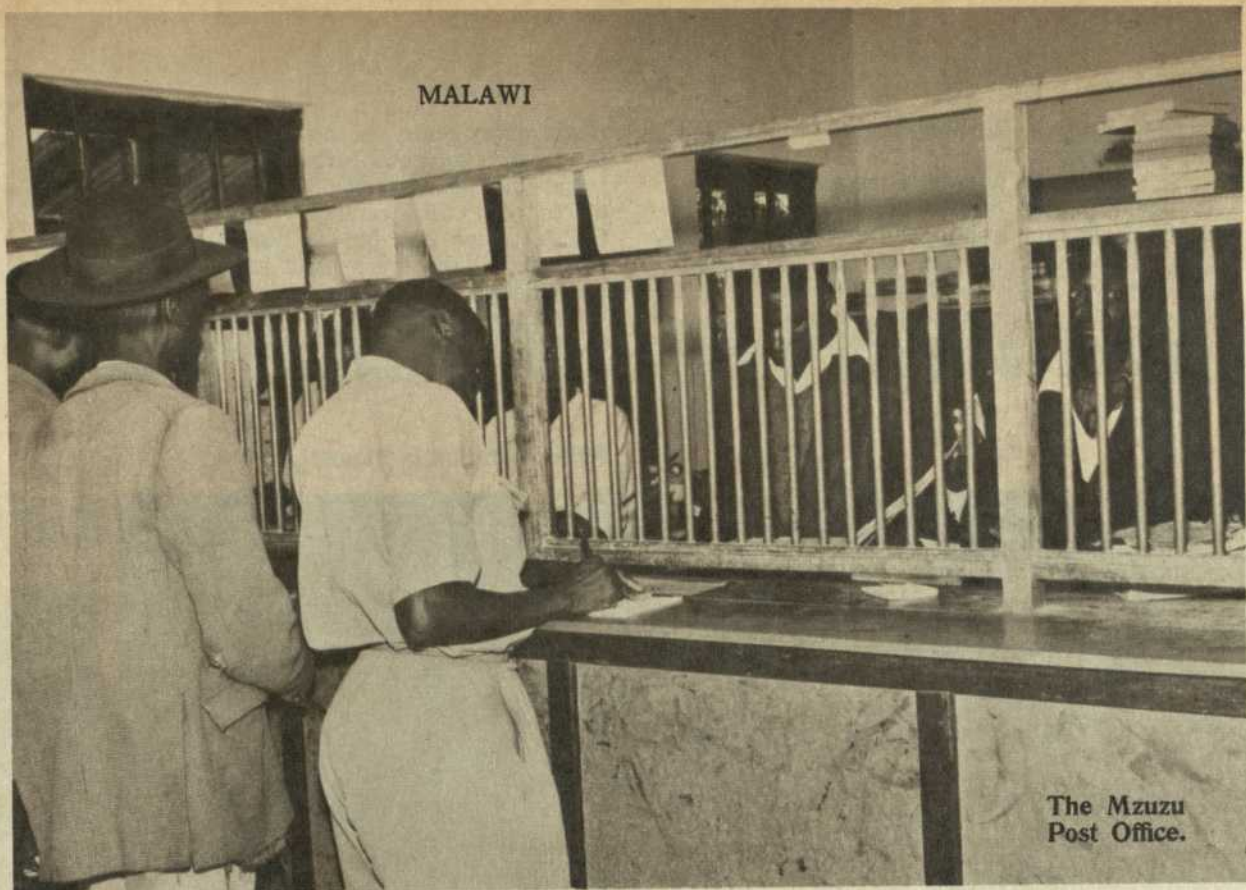
Q.— Does your association consider unity and brotherhood as its chief aim?

A.— For my part, I do think a certain evolution in this direction is taking place. It might be summarized in a word: *collaboration*. Each minstrel according to his or her specialization works for

the common good; teachers with their teaching techniques; musicians with their instruments; masons with their trowels; carpenters with their tools; dressmakers with their scissors; singers with their songs... All endeavour to brighten the lives of others and to ease their burdens. Our motto is — Church and neighbour.

Thank you, dear minstrels, for this friendly interview. I understand better now the reason for the admirable spirit of unity which reigns in the Sacred Heart parish of your dear city of Les Cayes. How true is this saying of Saint Augustin, "The harmony of voices prepares the harmony of hearts!"

MALAWI



The Mzuzu  
Post Office.

## MZUZU, FLOURISHING CITY

by Sister Céline Laurin, M.I.C.

It has been said that the laboratory of the ethnologist is the soil. The missionary's laboratory may also, in a certain sense, be said to be the *soil*. It is in order to work it that he goes out among the people, listens to their conversations, visits their homes, observes their customs and mores, inquires about their traditions. Thus he comes to know and to love them better.

For us, at present, our *soil* is Mzuzu, the most flourishing city in northern Malawi.

When, in 1956, Msgr. Saint Denis, W.F., established the seat of his prefecture in Mzuzu, only a handful of Europeans lived there. It took plenty of spunk to settle in what was then the bush.

Within the next ten years, Mzuzu mushroomed into a village which in no time expanded into a town. Mzuzu Estate as it used to be called has turned out to be an important industrial and commercial centre, a bustling terminus.

A flashback will help us understand something of its phenomenal growth. Fifteen years ago, Mzuzu was not even mentioned on the map of Malawi (former Nyasaland). But, since 1964, the geographical aspect of this country has been completely transformed, and Mzuzu now appears in the very centre of the northern region. It is fast catching up with the more important cities such as Blantyre-Limbe, Zomba, Lilongwe, Salima.

The pleasant temperate climate and the fresh green mountains girdling the youthful city beckon to an ever increasing population.

Mzuzu is justly proud of its residential areas and of its spacious governmental offices. The Ministry of Health has its resident doctor and its veterinary officer; the Ministry of Agriculture follows with particular attention work in the Vipya pine plantations. Electricity is distributed in all quarters, thanks to the efforts of the important

Escome Company. Running water is also available in all city homes.

There are active press and radio centres of information. Notable progress has been achieved in the field of communications and large planes linking Blantyre to Mzuzu daily take off from the new Air Malawi Airport. Moreover, an excellent service of buses runs throughout the province.

There is nothing like a walk about the city streets to feel the heart-throb of a population. The ad-

ministration centre is the first thing that strikes your eye as you enter Mzuzu. Off Main Street are found the police station, bus terminus, banking offices, post office, garages, Anglican churches and C.C.A.P., and, last but not least, the buildings of the tung oil processing plant which provides work for hundreds of labourers.

Your shopping may be done at Kandodo's or at Mandala's which carry everything you may need or almost, but where prices are relatively high;

Pine plantation in Mzuzu.



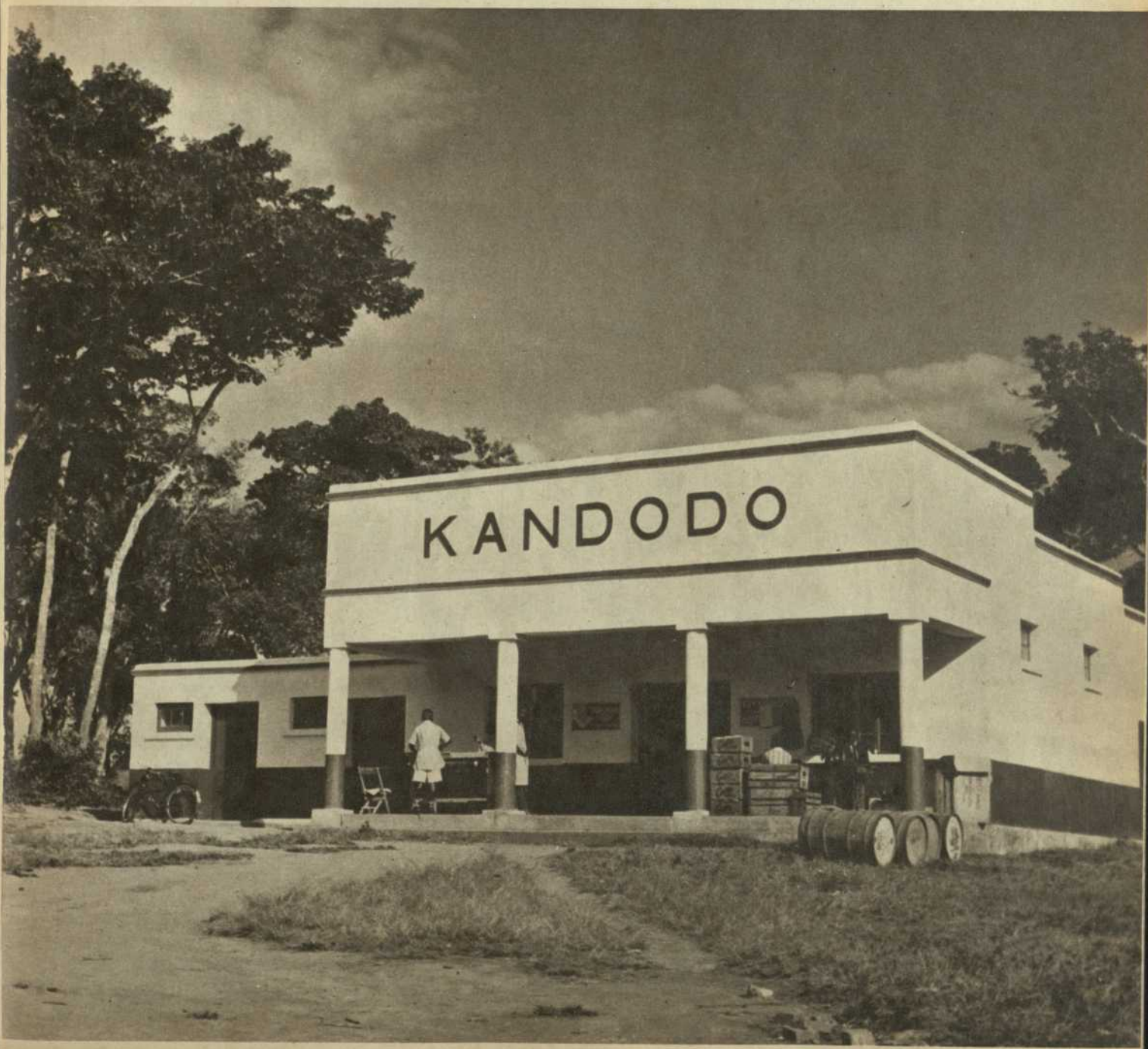
stylish garments, liquors, frozen meat, eggs, butter, cheese, ice cream (\$1.50 a pint), prunes, candied fruit, chocolates, cigarettes, etc...

At the outdoor market you will meet young African housewives going from one booth to another, eager on striking bargains. Many among them try to put into practice the cooking lessons learned at the Domestic Science Centre. Their straitened budget does not allow them to buy any luxuries,

but they do manage to cook nourishing and appetizing meals for their families.

Like the ethnologist, the missionary observes the people as they go about the business of daily living. No better observation point could be found than the Mzuzu outdoor market. Situated at a short distance from Kandodo's, it is one of the most animated spots in the city. Colourful booths reflect the originality of owners. Here you can

#### Kandodo General Store.





Sister Céline Laurin  
goes to market.

Mzuzu outdoor mar-  
ket with its colourful  
booths.





buy finely woven mats, beads, oil lamps, granite-ware, crockery, vegetables of all kinds and various sorts of greens which the Africans use as *dende* (seasoning). Oranges, grapefruits, bananas, and fresh pineapples abound; apples are rare and high-priced coming as they do from southern Africa. Pungent odours arise from the fish counters where the produce of Lake Malawi is on sale.

A particularly attractive nook is that where groups of young girls sell homemade cakes, cookies, and *masikoni*, rolls made out of corn flour and wild honey which delicacy literally melts in the mouth.

In the rear, are the meat stalls where fresh meat can daily be bought at very reasonable rates. Whether you buy sirloin or less select cuts all you need pay is 20 cents a pound.



Sister Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Marymount headmistress, and Sister Maria Francesca present the school flag.

Children sucking on sticks of sugar cane dart in and out of booths playing hide and seek, tag, or other games while adults go about their business. There is not one dull moment when the market is in full swing.

Close by is a flour mill where the people from the countryside have their maize ground before returning home.

Everywhere, transformations are taking place and evolution is evident in all fields of human endeavour. It is particularly remarkable on the educational level. The co-educational Mzuzu Government Secondary School is attended by over three hundred students. American Peace Corps Volunteers and V.S.O. (volunteers for overseas service) are on the staff and do health work throughout the province.

The Catholic parish hospital staffed by the Medical Missionaries of Mary is highly appreciated. About fifty babies a month are born in the maternity wards. Two Sisters who are surgeons perform several major surgical operations every week at the hospital. Already, several African young girls are enrolled at the nursing school attached to the hospital.

Marymount Secondary School is situated three miles from Mzuzu in a forested area, just far enough for students and teachers to enjoy the quiet of the countryside, yet near enough the city for shopping purposes. At present 150 students, all boarders, follow the four-year course preparatory to Cambridge examinations. Most are from the Northern Province but we have a scattering from all over Malawi. During their last two years, the girls narrow down their course of study to six or eight subjects which they will "sit". All must take English and it is the nemesis of most of them. Other subjects are French or Cinyanja, history or geography, health science or biology or general science, domestic science (sewing), Bible knowledge, mathematics or commercial. We are one of the few schools in Malawi teaching commercial subjects; we try to channel non-university students in this direction. When they finish the four-year course, they "sit" the all important Cambridge Examinations. A first or second class pass means the chance to attend university, whether overseas or



Marymount. Mr. and Mrs. William Pawek, lay missionaries, teach chemistry and biology.





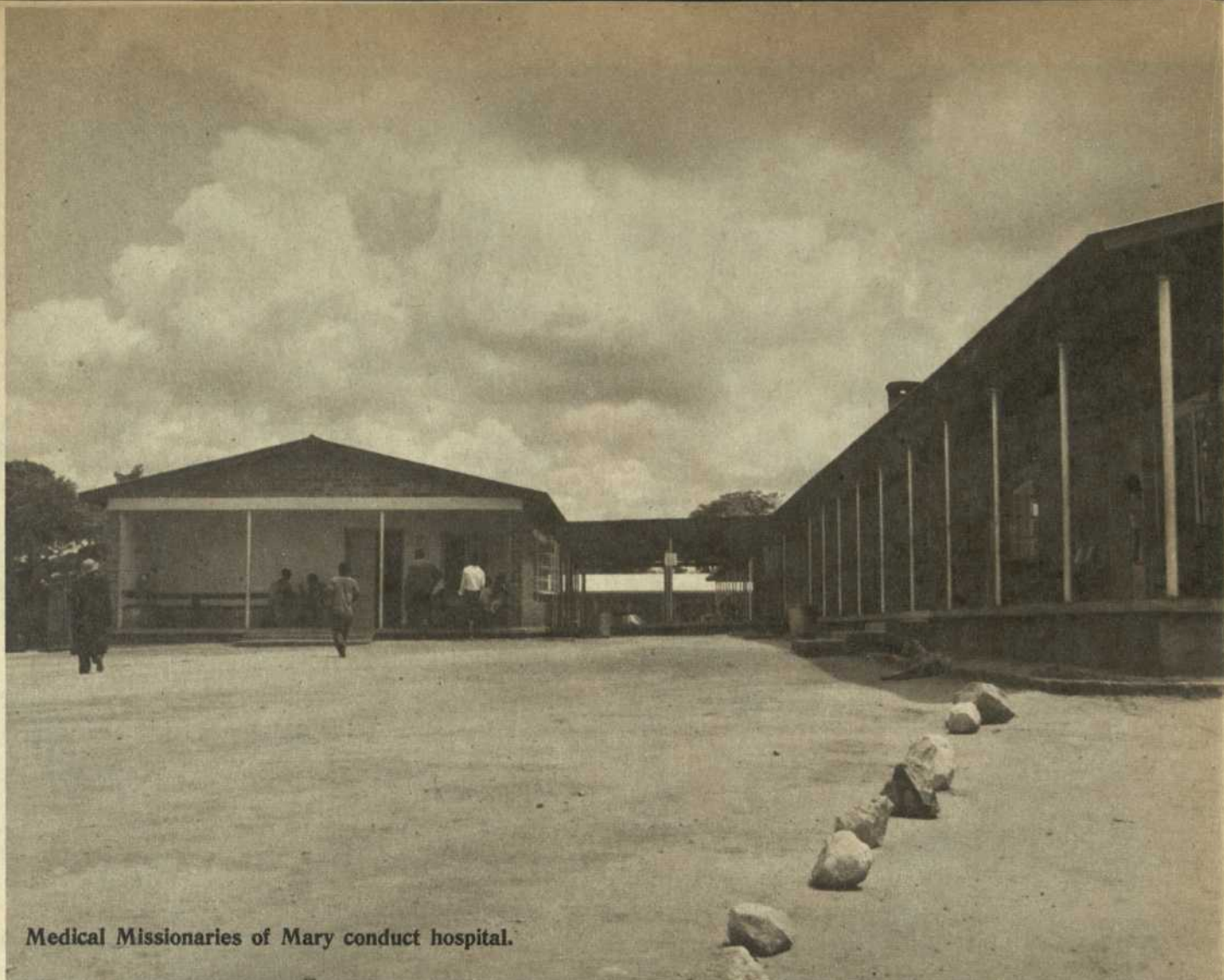
Reception at Marymount in honour of Mother Magdalen Marie, Superior General of M.I.C., and of Mother Candide of Jesus on official visitation. The meeting was international and ecumenical: Africans, Europeans, Americans, Protestants, and Catholics fraternized.

at the new University of Malawi. A lesser pass is the entry to a good job, or nurses' or teachers' training.

The staff consists of two Peace Corps members, of Lay Missionary Helpers from Los Angeles, and of six Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Part time staff includes Reverend Father de Repentigny the Catholic chaplain, Reverend Jeffries, the Presbyterian minister, and Mr. Kumwenda

of the Malawi Young Pioneers — the national equivalent to Scouts.

There is time for sports, the favourite being netball (girls' basketball). We have clubs once a week — arts and crafts, knitting, pen pals, dramatics, etc... The girls spend the two-hour lunch period washing clothes, chatting, and "twisting" their hair into intricate patterns. All work around the school, keeping buildings clean and windows spotless, bring-



Medical Missionaries of Mary conduct hospital.

ing in firewood for the kitchen, and keeping the grass cut. Weekends mean jiving to records, with an occasional tea party or slide show, perhaps a school play or a "concert" (jiving teams), debate or quiz show. About once a month there is some sort of competition with the co-educational Mzuzu Government Secondary School, two miles from us.

Although a mere three-year-old, Marymount has already obtained satisfactory results; one of last year's graduate was selected to pursue studies for a licentiate degree in Home Economics in Algeria; another is at present a student at a nursing school in England while four others are student nurses in Blantyre. A few have gone on to Soche Hill Teaching College or have taken up social studies. Finally, one of the most brilliant students from Marymount has, upon graduation, entered the Poor Clare Monastery at Lilongwe. Apparently, all sorts of

careers appeal to the feminine youth of Malawi.

Marymount is like a miniature campus with its classrooms, dormitories, sewing room and kitchen, laboratory, reception hall, and spacious grounds where the girls may indulge their love of sports. On the occasion of the recent olympic games in Blantyre, one of the Marymount girls won honour for her school.

Next door to Marymount is a flourishing primary school where the Rosarian Sisters (all Africans) teach the little girls.

On a neighbouring knoll, the White Fathers have established an industrial school for boys where students are taught carpentry, masonry, plumbing, etc.

The youthful, bustling city of Mzuzu epitomizes other thriving African cities which are mushrooming all over the land carrying the promise of a bright prosperous future for country and Church.



MATI, P. I.

by Sister Saint Patricia, M.I.C.<sup>1</sup>

# To love as Jesus Loved

To love as Jesus loved means to CARE for people. According to an item in the newspapers some time ago, a young girl was returning from work, late one evening in New York, when a man jumped out of the shadows and stabbed her. Fortunately, the wound was not fatal and she managed to shout for help. Frightened, the attacker ran away. However, when he saw that no one answered the girl's plea, he returned and stabbed her a second time. Again she screamed, "Help! Help!" A window giving on the street was opened and a man shouted, "Leave that girl alone." The assassin crept away. Bleeding profusely, the girl kept crying, "Help! Help!" Incredible as this may seem, nobody stirred, so the attacker returning a third time, finished the gruesome work then vanished. His victim died on the street from multiple stab wounds. A few days later, reporters from a local newspaper went from door to door asking people in the neighbourhood if they had known of the incident. It was finally estimated that eighty-six persons had seen the girl stabbed to death but had refused to get involved in something that might mean trouble for themselves. This young girl died because *no one cared*.

Shocking! How could people be so heartless, you ask. But, how about the countless children and adults who are starving to death in many parts of the world, because those who are surfeited *do not care*? How about the hundreds of lives that are

crushed in traffic accidents because drivers *do not care*? How about the Christians who glancing out of their windows see Christ stabbed in the hearts of men, because they *do not care*? To be a Christian, to love as Christ loved means to become involved in all that is life and of life, to give oneself without stint to the end.

With all our marvelous twentieth century advances in science, in medicine, in space travel, have we missed the principal element of life? Have we forgotten that our lives are interwoven with the lives of other people, so that each man can truly say, "I am a little bit of every single person who has crossed my path?" No man is an island. We all believe this, but is it a practical belief? Is it one that makes us remember how we are all dependent one upon the other?

Writing on the catholicity of Charles de Foucauld, Father Coudnay makes the following inquiry:

"Do we ever think of those who live in the slums of our large cities, in conditions where it is morally impossible to practise the virtues which go to make up the dignity of man, assure the stability of the home?"

"Do we ever give a thought to those who struggle against hopeless materialism, who are the victims of insidious philosophical systems and propaganda?"

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Blanchet

“Of those behind the Iron Curtain, who lead a life without hope, and who are no longer even considered as individuals, as persons?”

“Of those priests who are imprisoned, subjected to the most cruel and pernicious religious persecution of all times? Of all those for whom Christ died and who are, all, our brothers?”

Christ loves us and it was because of His love for us that He died on the cross. We have been given the commandment to love as He loved.

This commandment, how well it is fulfilled in many homes here, in the isolated town of Mati, almost at the southernmost tip of the Philippines, where I and six companions are doing our small part in spreading the message of Christ. I have been astounded at the true Christian charity found among the poor of Mati. Most of them earn their living as fishermen or as labourers in the large coconut plantations. No matter how poor they are, they live the true spirit of Christianity. Always, they are concerned with others.

Theirs are simple, monotonous lives. When fishing is good, they work hard; when it is not so good, they just hang around. But no matter what the season, no matter how little they have, there is always room in their modest homes for one poorer and perhaps more unfortunate than they.

An example out of many. One of our friends, a carpenter, father of five children — the eldest just eleven years old — was working on and off when we met him last year. He never made enough money to buy rice for his family, so they had to be satisfied with crushed corn. If he was able to catch fish, then they thought themselves pretty lucky.

His children are intelligent and studious. The three eldest, we took in our school this year, and offered work to the father as general handyman. As yet, his salary is not that of a high-salaried janitor but at least his family now has enough to eat. Thanks to benefactors back home, we are able to furnish the children with clothes, books, and a mid-morning and mid-afternoon lunch. A few weeks ago while visiting their little hut, I was surprised to meet an elderly woman apparently quite at home. Upon inquiring from the mother about the visitor, I learned that she was a widow without children and without a single relative who could take care of her. My good friends had taken her in as their

On the Mati dock.



With Mati fishermen.

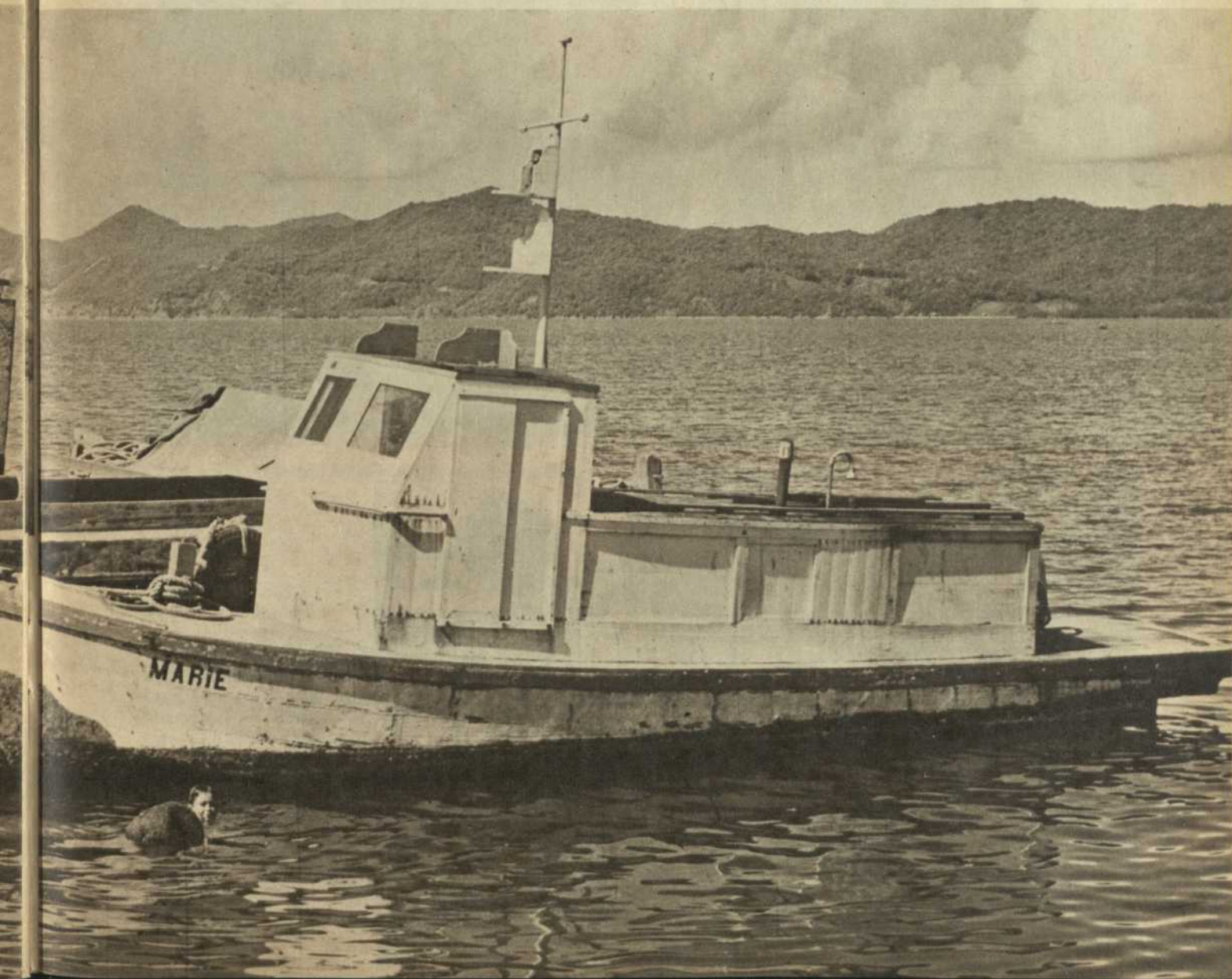




**Fishermen's houses are built on stilts.**



**Their wealth consists in fishing boats.**





A few of Sister Saint  
Patricia's friends at  
the town well.



Hospitable Filipino home where place is always found for the poor.

Philippine Herald Photo

own, telling neighbours that she was a distant aunt so that no one would blame her for adding this extra burden to their already heavy one. The old woman is now happy, secure; she will undoubtedly remain with her new family until time comes for her to leave for a better world. These poor people have only one room in which the whole family, mother, father, and five children sleep, eat, and live. Yet they did not hesitate to open their hearts and their home to one less fortunate than they.

How many spacious, luxuriously furnished homes in our prosperous homeland would have thus been opened to welcome a poor stranger looking for love and security? Perhaps her only refuge would have been an old folks' home, or the county poor farm... The people of Mati are indeed animated by the Christian spirit of the first Christians.

A few months ago, a poor fisherman of the region lost his small boat and fishing equipment during a

severe storm. His neighbours lost their nipa huts, washed away by the rampaging waters. Naturally, for the fisherman, the loss of his only means of livelihood meant tightening the belt and trying the best he could to eke out a livelihood. But thanks to the generosity of a true apostle of Christ, the fisherman was able to borrow enough money to buy a small motorboat along with the equipment needed. For him, this was a new beginning. Because he had himself been helped, he now turned around to give all the help he could to his own neighbours who had lost their meagre earthly possessions. This man with a home so small, it was barely enough for his own family of nine, offered hospitality to ten more persons. Can a better example of true Christian love be given?

When Jesus was to become incarnate, He chose the appearance which would best reveal Him. He left aside all that could have impressed us — prestige, power, strength, wealth or nobility of race — and chose instead love, tenderness, simplicity, weakness, fidelity to duty. All those who do not love the poor; who turn away from the sick, the wounded, the dying; those who do not love the misfits of this world; those who selfishly put their own comforts before the comforts of the neighbours; to all these Christ has left the terrible responsibility of choosing not to join and follow Him. Louis Evelyn remarks: "To love someone is to bid him to live, invite him to grow. Since people do not have the courage to mature unless someone has faith in them, we have to reach those we meet at the level where they stopped developing, where they were given up as hopeless, and so withdrew into themselves and began to secrete a protective shell because they thought they were alone and *no one cared*."

And so we must admit that to love as Jesus loved means to CARE for others, to become involved, to be interested in others, in all men, our brothers. It means that our love for them must reach out to them, no matter how repulsive they may have become. Faith must make us see an immortal soul capable of adoring and praising God in the most miserable miser, as well as the most repulsive prostitute, the filthiest drunkard. Christ loves ALL men. Let us dare to do the same, let us dare love in a world that does not know how to love, nor how to care. May our love for our fellow men be such that we can experience and make ours the prayer of Michel Quoist:

"Lord, why did you tell me to love all men, my brothers? I have tried, but I turn to you,

frightened... I was alone, I was at peace, sheltered from the wind and the rain, kept clean. I would have stayed unsullied in my ivory tower, but, Lord, you have discovered a breach in my defenses, You have forced me to open my door. Like a squall of rain in my face, the cry of men has awakened me; stealing in like a shaft of light, Your grace has disturbed me. Rashly enough, I left my door ajar... Now, Lord, I am lost! Outside, men were lying in wait for me. I did not know they were so near; in this house, in this street, in this office: my neighbour, my colleague, my friend. As soon as I started to open the door I saw them, with outstretched hands, anxious eyes, longing hearts, like beggars on church steps...

"The first came in, Lord. There was, after all, a bit of space in my heart. I welcomed them, I would have cared for them and fondled them, my very own little lambs, my little flock. You would have been pleased, Lord; I would have served and honoured You in a proper, respectable way. Until then, it was sensible... But the next ones, Lord, the others... I had not seen them; they were hidden behind the first ones. There were more of them. They were wretched; they overpowered me without warning. They crowded in; I had to find room for them. Now they have come from all over in successive waves, pushing one another, jostling one another.

"Lord, they hurt me! They are in the way, they are all over. They are too hungry; they are consuming me! I cannot do anything more; as they come in, they push the door, and the door opens wider... Ah, Lord! My door is wide open! I cannot stand it any more! What about my job? My family? My peace? My liberty and me? Ah, Lord! I have lost everything; I do not belong to myself any longer; there is no more room for me at home...

"Do not worry, God says, you have gained all; while men came in to you, I your Father, I your God, slipped in among them."

\*  
\* \*

Yes, God has slipped into the home of the poor carpenter, of the luckless fisherman, and in many other Filipino homes wherein dwell souls who have learnt to think more of others than of themselves and who have learned to love as Jesus loved.



Race before the banquet.

## BANQUET FOR THE TOTS

by Sister Marie Paule, M.I.C.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the celebrations which marked the Centennial of our Foundress, a group of French girls, Sister Blandine Simard's pupils, had expressed the wish to honour the founding Mother's sense of generous hospitality by becoming hosts of the poor at a family dinner. The girls discussed the matter among themselves, but without arriving at any clear-cut decision. Meantime, holidays came around and they went home to France. To all appearances, the project had fallen through.

We had underestimated the enthusiasm of youth. As soon as they returned in early September, the girls selected six members of their class entrusted with the task of collecting the necessary funds to finance a banquet which would be offered to one hundred children of destitute families in Hong Kong. For our part, we placed at their disposal the great hall of our Tak Sun School as dining room for the felicitous event.

<sup>1</sup> Marie Paule Larocque

<sup>2</sup> Evelyn Martin

On the last Sunday in November, at 3:00 p.m., the youthful guests arrived, all aglow with suppressed excitement. Anxious to get the most out of the occasion, some hopeful mammas had brought along not only one but several children. It had to be explained to them that, for this once, covers had been prepared for only one hundred little ones. Besides, they had been told of this beforehand and had themselves chosen the child who was to have a place at the table. To cheer them up, we promised them that other such affairs would be arranged in the near future at Tak Sun.

Sister Saint Martin of Tours<sup>2</sup> entertained the little guests with toys and games while tables were being made ready. Then the big doors of the hall swung back and the children trooped into their banquet hall decorated with bunches of colourful balloons. Some of our orphaned girls from Canton, groups of students, and a few Legionaries of Mary helped with the table service.



When all had taken their places, Sister Saint Martin of Tours wished everyone a hearty welcome and congratulated the girls on their project. In the place of honour, decked with flowers and greenery, was the bust of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit, cause of this joyful gathering. Grace was said and chopsticks and spoons played a merry game.

How pleasant it was to see with what gracious courtesy Diane, Martine, Dominique, Joelle, Nolwen waited on their guests! As they do not understand Chinese, they often ran up to the Sisters to ask what the little ones were saying. They were deeply touched when after vainly coaxing two little girls to eat their food they heard them say, "Please we want to take the food home to Mamma..."

Some prudent mothers had sent the following message, "If my child cannot eat everything, please put leftovers in this paper bag." Many among the children had this bag and message pinned to their clothing.

After all had eaten their fill, a great dish of rice was left over and distributed among the most des-

titute. The tables had been cleared and the time for going home had come. Just then, the charitable hostesses reentered the hall, this time carrying trays on which bags and cartons were piled high. Each of the cartons contained a piece of fried chicken, a thick slice of ham, a chunk of spiced beef, and another of pork; each bag contained five pounds of raw rice, a loving gift from Mr. Lee, in charge of the canteen at our Mount Good Hope School.

So much hand clapping and such merry shouts greeted the distribution of these boxes, and bags that we had to wait for about ten minutes before being able to say grace and dismiss the little guests. Pandemonium again broke loose when the toy balloons which decked the hall were snipped open with scissors and out fell little bags of goodies.

The mammas who were anxiously waiting in the yard for their darlings, exclaimed in joyful surprise when cartons and bags were thrust into their hands. But the happiest of all were the young French hostesses who, for the first time had experienced the profound joy of bringing relief to Hong Kong's hungry children.



# WEDDING BELLS IN JAPAN

by Sister Joseph of the Holy Family, M.I.C.<sup>1</sup>

In ancient Japan, women had the best of things. Before the fourteenth century, the line of succession was handed down through the female side of the family. Wives then had no mother-in-law problems for the husband had to live in his wife's family. With the development of the feudal system, the tables were turned and wives began to be regarded as subject to their husbands in all things. As time went on, not only were they ruled by their mothers-in-law, but they were relegated to a sort of Cinderella status in the household. Thanks to the new democratic constitution, however, the wife's status changed again, this time for the better.

"I want you people to meet the man of my choice," said former Princess Suga, youngest daughter in the imperial family, at a press conference given a few days before her formal engagement. This statement, the boldest ever made by a Princess inside the Chrysanthemum Curtain, did not come as a shock to most of Japanese modern youth.

Many of the customs once considered sacred have gradually become incompatible with current social ideas. Thus, marriage through the arrangement of go-betweens is slowly giving way. The modern trend is to consider it as a contract in which both parties have, or should have, equal rights and equal responsibilities.

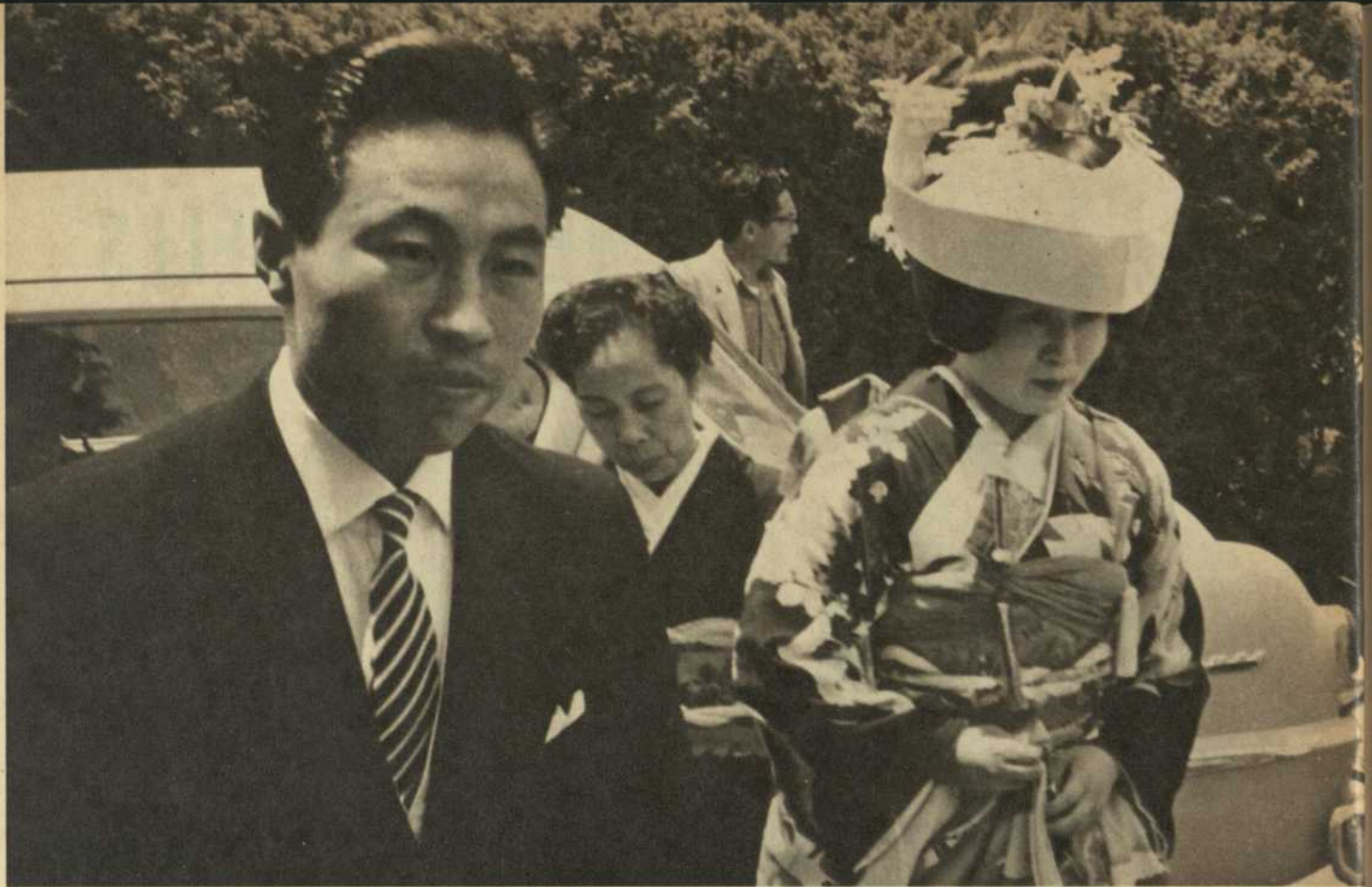
Nonetheless, except in the large cities, most marriages continue to be arranged through go-betweens who make careful inquiries as to the suitability of the proposed match.

In the case of *miai* (arranged marriage) the go-betweens usually contrive a meeting of the prospec-

The lovely kimono and  
its gorgeous "obi".

Usaku Tojo Photo

<sup>1</sup> Jeannette Delisle



Here comes the bride!

tive bride and bridegroom at some "neutral" spot, a park, the lobby of a hotel... If this meeting is successful and both parties are agreeable, a definite date is set. The bridegroom's parents then send betrothal gifts — fresh fish, rice wine, and an *obi* — sash — or money to purchase one.

A few days before the wedding proper, the bride's trousseau, bedding, and other furniture are sent to the groom's house. Meantime, the go-betweens are kept busy seeing that nothing goes amiss.

The ceremony of *san-san-ku-do*, three, three, nine, exchange of cups of rice wine is the main part of a Japanese wedding. Seated facing each other, the couple take three sips from each cup in turn, beginning with the smallest, and thus pledge marriage vows. Three is considered a lucky number in Japan.

For centuries, Japanese weddings were purely family affairs, the ceremony of *san-san-ku-do* taking place at the groom's house. In recent years, it has become the custom, at least in large urban centres, to hold the wedding at a shrine or church. "Shinto

is for happy occasions; Buddhism for sad ones," say the Japanese with a smile. Since marriage is considered a happy occasion, most weddings are held under Shinto auspices. Buddhist and Christian ceremonies are distinctly in the minority. Usually the home of the bridegroom or a Shinto temple is chosen as the place where the marriage takes place. The fashionable time is the afternoon, although evening weddings were the custom for many centuries.

Catholic marriages are celebrated with as much solemnity as possible. What an exquisite combination of colour and good taste is the bride's elaborate kimono! In some large cities, white for brides according to the western fashion has become common. White bridal dresses are of course much cheaper than the ornate bridal kimono.

Few people in Japan marry in summer, late autumn and early winter being regarded as the most auspicious wedding season. Why? Probably because in a country with high humidity, it is burdensome for people to wear heavy kimono during the summer heat.

# Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

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NOVITIATE, Pont Viau, Laval City  
OUTREMONT, 314 St. Catherine Road, Montreal 8  
CHINESE HOSPITAL, 355 Faillon St., East, Montreal 10  
NOMININGUE, Labelle County, P. Q.  
RIMOUSKI, P. Q., 85 St. Germain Street  
JOLIETTE P. Q., 750 St. Louis Street  
QUEBEC, 1073, St. Cyrille Street West  
VANCOUVER, Oriental Hospital, 236 Campbell St.  
VANCOUVER, Mount St. Joseph's Hospital,  
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TROIS RIVIERES, P. Q., 1325 de la Terriere Street  
GRANBY, P. Q., 235 Dufferin Street  
GRANBY, P. Q., 50 St. Joseph Street  
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OTTAWA, 30, Goulburn Avenue  
PERTH, N. B., P. B. 259  
EDMUNDSTON, N. B., 85 Victoria Street

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Taiwan, Republic of China  
TAIPEI, 363, An Tung Chieh, Taiwan, Republic of China  
SUAO, 36 Chung Cheng Rd., Suao Ilan Hsien,  
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WAKAMATSU, 480, Sakae machi, Aizu Wakamatsu  
TOKYO, 108-4 cho me, Fukazawa cho, Setagaya ku

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## MADAGASCAR

MORONDAVA, Madagascar  
AMBOHIBARY, Sambaina, Madagascar  
ANTSIRABE, St. Thérèse's Mahazoarivo Parish  
TANANARIVO, Tsaramasay  
MAHABO, via Morondava

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## GUATEMALA

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## BOLIVIA

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MANILA, 2212 del Rosario St., Tondo  
SAN JUAN, Little Baguio, Rizal  
LAS PINAS, Rizal  
MATI, Davao Province  
DAVAO City, Our Lady of Good Counsel Hall, Florentino Torres St.  
PADADA, Davao Province  
BAGUIO City, 73, Paedal, Box 83

## WEST INDIES

LES CAYES, Haiti  
LES COTEAUX, Haiti  
ROCHE A BATEAU, Haiti  
PORT SALUT, Haiti  
CAMP PERRIN, Haiti  
MIREBALAIS, Haiti  
LIMBE, Haiti  
CAP HAITIEN, Haiti  
CHANTAL, Haiti  
TROU DU NORD, Haiti  
PORT AU PRINCE, Orphanage, Cité No. 2, C. P. 1085 Haiti  
PORT AU PRINCE, Novitiate, Cité No. 2, C. P. 1085 Haiti  
CROIX DES BOUQUETS, C. P. 1291 Haiti  
DESCHAPELLES, Albert Schweitzer Hospital,  
Boite postale 2213, B, Port au Prince, Haiti  
LA BOULE, C. P. 1085, Haiti  
HINCHE, Haiti

COLON, apartado 21, Province of Matanzas, Cuba

## CENTRAL AFRICA

KATETE, St. Teresa's Parish, Champira P.O., Malawi  
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. Michel's Parish, Chitipa Box 100, Malawi  
NKATA BAY, Nkata Bay P.O. Box 9, Malawi  
MZUZU, Mzuzu P.O. Box 24, Malawi  
MZIMBA, St. Paul's Parish, Mzimba P.O., Malawi  
FORT JAMESON, P.O. Box 107, Zambia  
KANYANGA, Lundazi P.O., Zambia  
NYIMBA, Sacred Heart Hospital, Nyimba P.O., Zambia  
CIKUNGU, Kazimuli P.O., Zambia



Homecrafts. Young students learn to weave sisal fibre under the direction of Sister Doris Twyman, Shawinigan.