

# MIC MISSION NEWS

MAY-JUNE 1996

A woman wearing a light blue short-sleeved button-down shirt, a light blue headscarf, and sunglasses is smiling. She is holding a large, ripe, reddish-orange fruit in her right hand and two smaller, green, round fruits in her left hand. She is standing next to a tree trunk in a lush, green outdoor setting.

*In Countries  
of the West Indies*

# MIC MISSION NEWS

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A MUST  
WORD AND LIFE  
WITH  
CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU



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HAITI

Marie-Lorencia Cantave,  
M.I.C., picks cachimans.

### PAGE 31

Lisette Fortin, M.I.C. and  
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Photos: M.I.C., Haiti

### CENTERFOLD

Stéphanie Plouffe and  
Étienne Gagnon,  
St-Gabriel, Rimouski, Qc.

Photo: Éric Gagnon

# FINDING POCKETS OF HOPE

For some years now, worldwide attention has been focused on the countries of the West Indies. Studies and reports have centered on possible solutions to the grave economic and political problems in the area. What is happening today in those countries? What are some of the causes and tendencies of the present situation?

While the problems are enormous, there are also many signs of hope. This issue brings us glimpses on how Christ's message continues to find a home among the people with whom the M.I.C. Sisters work, especially in Haiti and in Cuba. Reading the signs of the times, we rejoice at new manifestations of the Spirit wherever they occur. With events such as the democratic elections in Haiti and renewed dialogue in Cuba, there is a growing confidence among the people that it is possible to build a world where peace and justice will reign.

The Church in Cuba presents the reality of a communion, eager to enter into a dialogue with the Marxist world. Disappointed by the revolution and revitalized by the missions organized for the 5<sup>th</sup> centennial of evangelization, people are returning to the Church, and among them many young people. This constitutes a call to a new evangelization. A gathering of young parishioners in Bahia Honda took as theme, "Young people, I say to you, arise and walk!" (Lk 5:23) During this "special period" in the history of Cuba, the youth are challenged to reflect on what they can do for their family, their country and their Church.

After centuries of being exploited and excluded, the people of Haiti are reshaping their nation and their Church with hope and audacity. They rejoice and look to the future with cautious optimism. In some ways, hope in a new tomorrow enables them



to build their lives anew amid the rubble of devastation and suffering of all kinds.

To be with the people means facing enormous challenges. Despite problems, the life of the Church today in these countries of the West Indies is vibrant; her vitality is being carried into society at large and continues to play an important part in the evangelization of the people. Religious communities, missionaries, pastoral agents and members of lay movements are reviving their models of ministry in relation to the political openness now evident. In journeying with people, be they in Cuba, Haiti, or elsewhere, the M.I.C. Sisters discover that they could offer a gift. It is a priceless gift - that of reflecting to people their own goodness, letting them see that what they do casually is worth being proud of and has great value.

As Pope John Paul II said: "That deep amazement at the human person's worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say, the Good News!" How best express our faith in a brighter future for our world? Let us look at the goodness around us with child-like simplicity... God invites us to learn from His "little ones" how to be both generous givers and joy-filled receivers of the unique gift of hope. □

Ma. Anthea Raso, M.I.C.

# Haiti 1990-1996, a Missed Opportunity?

BY HÉROLD JEAN-FRANÇOIS



Hérold Jean-François

Haiti made the headlines more than once in the last few years. It had some great moments of hope and some major disillusion. The people of Haiti have lived a long Calvary. And as happens after a cyclone or a hurricane, life once again claims its rights... the people are invited to lift up their heads and get together to tackle the task of rebuilding.

Hérold Jean-François, a Haitian writer, journalist and political analyst, sketched the major events of the history of Haiti and its search and struggle for more justice and equity in a democratic process. We publish parts of his analysis of the situation in his country.

## A NEW PAGE OF HISTORY

**W**ith the elections of December 1990, the Republic of Haiti was to turn a new page of history. The vast majority of the Haitian people who had been excluded from taking any part in the processes of decision-making, would now participate in the writing of their own history. These elections marked the outcome of two hundred years of struggle and ignored claims which spurred numerous moments of revolution throughout Haiti's history. Dating back to 1807 with the peasant insurrection of Goman in the distant South-East of the country (Grand'Anse), these revolutions took on new forms in all parts of the new nation, at different times in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until peasant uprisings were crushed during the long transition that followed the Duvalier era (1986-1996).

The masses that were once ignored have now gained a new consciousness. With their voting ballot they have finally become citizens, a right which they had been denied. Following the principle of "one man, one vote" strongly claimed by the Blacks of South Africa and promoted by their leader Nelson Mandela, the Haitian masses, in addition to the right of citizenship, have gained equality. Despite the problems of a difficult process and the reaction of hostile conservative forces to the emergence of the majority on the political scene, this right seems irreversible. The Haitian society of today and of the future must organize itself on the basis of this new reality - the participation of those who constitute the essence of the nation, those whose claims and concerns must be addressed by the programmes set up by decision makers if they are to stand a chance of being viable.

## FROM "REJECTION" TO THE REFUSAL TO TURN BACK

The emergence of the masses provoked what I call a "rejection" on the part of the Haitian oligarchy, which considered the power resulting from the elections of 1990 a loss of leader-

A new page of history for Haiti!



Photo: M. Marcoux, M.I.C.



Photo: J. Dallaire

The masses in Haiti are more and more conscious of their responsibility to participate in the process of change.

ship. After two centuries of domination, the Haitian oligarchy would not hear of making room for those it had always looked upon with the greatest contempt. Coexistence promised to be difficult and nothing would be left untried to defeat the people's power raised on December 16, 1990. Seven months after the beginning of the experience that aimed at "changing the State", the forces of the status quo countered with a coup. Repression was felt day by day: thousands killed, thousands fleeing by sea, thousands displaced within the country and living as refugees.\*

By refusing to turn back, however, the Haitian masses, with the firm support of the international community, resisted the coup for three years, thwarting the attempt to undermine the emergence of the majority on the political scene of Haiti. "The return to constitutional order" was the motto that stirred millions of citizens! This return to the democratic process was fundamental and vital to the future of Haitian democracy based on the principle of the sovereignty of the people expressed in freedom. (...)

Though it failed to undermine the people's movement, which, on the contrary, was strengthened in trial, the violent halt of September 30, 1991 slowed down a process which had started with the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship on February 7, 1986. The coup caused serious tears in the social fabric of Haiti. The first consequence was that it took three years away from the mandate of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, elected on December 16, 1990. The putschists did not allow for the actualization of the experience that promised to change the Government. The Government was now to be shaped in terms of the majority, a departure from the apartheid model established after the assassination on October 17, 1806, of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, founder of the Haitian nation. The coup did not allow us to see the real content of the people's plan or to judge its viability. Would it succeed? would it fail? The military never gave us the opportunity to find out!

#### DEMOCRACY: CONTINUITY AND SUCCESSION

Even if the coup of September 30, 1991, seriously affected the people's movement forcing many thousands of its members to flee abroad, it did not succeed in putting an end to the Haitian people's determination to start over from scratch. On December 17, 1995, five years after the historic vote of December 16, 1990, the people voted according to democratic continuity. Despite the low voter turnout (27%), these elections made the democratic process irreversible in Haiti after 10 years of a difficult struggle.

In 1996, we are not in the ideal situation of 1990. The country is living the traumatic experience of foreign presence which robs us of the full

exercise of our sovereignty; the flame of the people's movement is flickering; there are disillusion and disappointments of all kinds; the people's power cannot afford to keep its promises to change the Government; economic difficulties are a daily occurrence in many homes in a country where the absence of the State is a flagrant fact. In 1996, we are at a time of questioning.

But in terms of democracy, there is one major achievement. For the first time since the independence of Haiti in 1804, we witnessed on February 7, 1996, the democratic transfer of power between two Presidents who came to power through a free election process. This gesture marked the beginning of a new political era in Haiti. By getting accustomed to having a succession of leaders in office, democracy in Haiti will become stronger. The Haitian people will now have to organize in order to get out of the beaten paths of the charismatic leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide so that politics may be conducted on the basis of solid structures provided by political parties. Hence the people will vote on a platform and sanction the leaders, with their leanings based on the candidates' ability or inability to change their situation.

#### CONTINUING WITH THE REFORMS

In addition to acquiring the habit of democratic succession favoured by the new political reality in Haiti, the country is also freed from a century-old burden which has always impaired its development. The Haitian army which patterned everything in terms of the interests of its leaders and their allies has vanished from the political scene of Haiti. All that remains is for Parliament to finally sanction its demise. With this major handicap out of the way, the Haitian people will learn how to live in a democracy, relieved of the crushing weight of the military institution and with equal opportunities for all.

In 1996, Haiti's democratic movement will carry on with new institutions, such as the Police, which needs to



*Finding a middle ground in order to live in harmony!*

Photo: M. P. Charbonneau, M.I.C.

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### HEARTFELT THANKS

Photo: J. Dallaire



*The Haitian people have had their share of suffering and death for the victory of democracy.*

convince the citizenry of its willingness and capacity to break away from the repressive and arbitrary customs of the old army. Reforms will have to follow to satisfy the demands of justice, discontinuing the policy of impunity and of a certain category of citizens deemed untouchable and above the law. The new Haitian society must put in place proper mechanisms to realize the motto of this country: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. The way to bring about "change in Government" is to establish norms of equal justice, which is the basis of any democracy.

### COEXISTENCE AND TOLERANCE

Reconciliation among the people of Haiti is difficult to achieve because of the deep wounds and enormous social barriers that have divided the country over many decades. But it is vital for them to take the means to coexist with one another and to accept their differences. Haitian society has much work to do to interiorize new values such as tolerance. The only way to achieve integration of the two societies of Haiti is to succeed in the effort to coexist with one another so that, on the long term, they may become a single nation striving for the same interests and goals. The stakes are high, yet ridden with uncertainty! □

\* *Le Coup de Cédras*, Hérold Jean-François, a book about the coup d'État of September 30, 1991, with a comparative study of the socio-political system in Haiti from independence in 1804 to this day. Editions MEDIATEK, Port-au-Prince, October 1995.



Photo: T. Lortie, M.I.C.

*Elcius Jolicoeur and his son François - With democracy, one can hope for a better future for Haiti!*

## 1996 MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

### MAY

*Blessed Virgin Mary, teach every Christian woman how to welcome and fulfill her special role in the Church's mission to spread the Gospel.*

### JUNE

*Lord, grant that the guiding principles of the Synod for Africa may kindle new ardour for evangelization in the Christian communities of that continent.*



# On this Morning

**A**fter the Second World War, our world began to dream of peace... a great dream for all the children of tomorrow!

How are things fifty years later?

This prayer was offered on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June last year, at the beaches of Normandy, France, where the Allied troops landed. Let us say this prayer on behalf of the thousands of men, women and children who are still, today, victims of deadly conflicts on our planet Earth. Let us also pray for all peacemakers - past and present, who have offered their lives for peace in the world!

*O Lord,*

*I come, on this morning, to offer the prayer of the living for the dead. Here every wave of the sea tirelessly recalls the memory of those young men who came from overseas to conquer back our freedom. Here every breath of the wind whispers: Forget not, remember them!*

*I come, on this morning, to offer the prayer of the living for the living, the gratitude which we owe all the wounded and the bruised, their families, all the nations, all the elders to whom we owe our freedom.*

*I come, on this morning, to offer the prayer of my generation and the immense questioning that haunts it...*

*How could civilizations grown in the shadow of Golgotha, after so many centuries of Christianity, end up planting so many crosses on the beaches?*

*How is it that after such progress of the human mind the Beast keeps rising again and again out of man?*

*I come, on this morning, to pray for hope.*

*I come to draw from the source of courage of those who died and of the veterans*

*the capacity to give my life for the oppressed of the world and the will to build a just world.*

*I come to draw from the heart of Christ the certainty that a crushed heart can save the world.*

*Military Bishop Michel Dubost*

*From a text printed in La Croix / L'Événement*



*The M.I.C.s of Haitian origin, more than thirty of them, immerse themselves in various milieus to help build up the future of their country and of their Church.*

# Serving in the Mission in Haiti

IN COLLABORATION

*To participate in the missionary activity of the Church within and outside the country remains the basic orientation of the M.I.C. sisters in Haiti. In the diversified field of evangelization, priorities have been established: literacy, missionary animation, vocation promotion, and the significant work for the development of persons. Thanks to the collaboration of her companions, Jeannette Fanfan, M.I.C., Provincial Superior, sent us a comprehensive account about the Sisters' commitments and apostolic activities in Haiti.*

## SCHOOLING AND LITERACY

**W**e have been concerned for a long time about the situation of school-age children not attending school. Many large families

are unable to meet the financial requirements of the school. Unfortunately, a child who doesn't start going to school at the age of five or six is doomed to become an illiterate person. Aware of this, we started an education programme for this deprived clientele. Out of thirty children who took part in the programme set up last year by Sr. Étienne Guérette, twelve are continuing this year.



*Sr. Marie-Josèphe Simard (l.) with a group of adults following a literacy programme.*

Last October, with the help of every member of the fraternity, we received eighty children who were all excited about coming to school. Sr. Enna St-Louis, Directress of the school, makes the necessary facilities available to us in the afternoon. Sr. Nicole Joseph is responsible for the programme and the pedagogical aspect of the project. Sr. Germaine Veilleux is glad to work with little Joel, 8, and Sorel, 12, who have a hard time following the group. I personally make sure this programme is

going well, for my companions and I feel it is an important one. We gladly offer these children a good meal two or three times a week, which is made possible by the generous food donations of Mrs. Raymone Pune, Directress of Food for the Poor, and thanks to the help of the parents who agree to prepare the meals each in turn; thanks also to the children themselves who are proud to bring in a small load of wood on their heads or some needed spices.

We hope that after two years of remedial classes, these children, even though older than their peers, will be able to attend the local schools and to take their places in the classes assigned to them. Parallel to this schooling programme, four literacy centers were established for motivated adults who realize the importance of knowing how to read and write or, to use their own expression, for adults "wishing to come out of darkness". This commitment involves many challenges, but what a joy it is each day to see these children happy to come to school and these adults able to read and write after only a few months! It is a grace to work with a team of dynamic men and women monitors who take the interests of the children and adults with whom they work. Besides, without the generous contribution of each member of the M.I.C. fraternity of Port-au-Prince, a project like this could never go on so smoothly!

*Marie-Josèphe Simard, M.I.C.*

### MISSION PROMOTION WITH "TIMOUN MISYONÈ"

I returned to Haiti in August 1981 after three wonderful years of work for the Diocesan Missionary Office of Chicoutimi, my native Diocese. A very different mission awaited me here. A Haitian priest had just been appointed National Director of the Pontifical Missionary Works (OPM). With the consent of his Bishop, he called on the M.I.C.s hoping to find

a sister to assist him in this task, which was completely new to him and to the Church of Haiti. In fact, nothing had yet been organized in terms of the OPM. When I was first proposed this service, my response wasn't a straight-out "yes". However, after reflecting on all that our Foundress, Délia Tétreault, had done to promote the missionary calling of the Church, I felt chal-

and the amount of work and procedures it requires are in no way minimal. Fortunately, we all work as a team!

This modest publication is designed as an instrument of information, education and evangelization to help Haitian children to realize their own human worth and the richness of their culture - by knowing about children of other countries and acting in solidarity with them - and to discover that they have a mission to fulfill in the local and universal Church. In short, to integrate the Good News in their everyday life and to share it. We now publish five issues instead of six from October to June, in keeping with the peak moments of the liturgical year and of the school calendar. Circulation is currently 15,000 copies sent to the nine Dioceses of Haiti. From the moment there is contact and promotion, children are motivated and accept to make sacrifices. For example, at recreation time, many will use some of the small change they have for snacks to



*Members of leadership team of Timoun Misyonè with Zanmi Solèy - Sr. Lucette Gilbert (l.)*

lenged. Besides, the experience I had lived just before with the parish missionary teams encouraged me to give a positive answer.

I therefore went to Cap-Haitien, where the first OPM Secretariate was opened, to be later transferred to the capital city, Port-au-Prince. The magazine Timoun Misyone (Missionary Children) was first launched in the Cape city. The first issue published on January 25, 1983 was just a tiny brochure. It is still rather modest in its mini-format with 16 pages. Nevertheless, the goals are comprehensive



*Gisèle Vachon, M.I.C., is a team member of the mission promotion team for the evangelization of children and adults.*

get a copy of the little magazine that has just come out.

Though the Missionary Childhood doesn't aim at creating a movement as such, a number of groups of missionary children are being formed. They organize letter writing projects with other schools in the country and even with children of other countries. Thus the Asian countries wishing to establish friendly connections with countries of Latin America initiated a twinning project. The Philippines chose Haiti. The children of Haiti are so glad to know their brothers and sisters of the Philippines! Pope John Paul II said: "The cooperation of children in evangelization is irreplaceable. The Church stakes high hopes on the ability of children to change the world."

There is great joy in being "sent" to those who are the hope of the future. They reveal to us the wonders of the Lord. Our team must also give some of its time to the other sectors, the young people and the adults who are quite receptive when faced with the missionary dimension of their Baptism and the need for openness to the whole world. Mother Délia once wrote: "God is the One who does the great things while we do the little ones. (...) Everything must begin small."

*Lucette Gilbert, M.I.C.*

### HEALTH SERVICES AND THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN

The history of Haiti is a constant reminder that women have a predominant role in this country. They are still the heart of the country today. I believe that working with mothers and future mothers is building up pillars of society.

The Dispensary of Chantal provides many opportunities for us to be in contact with mothers. We are often faced with very worried women whose hope and faith in life needs to be restored. Our role is usually simply to give a word of encouragement, to do an act of kindness and concern, a thoughtful gesture. We are in

contact with pregnant women; besides looking after their health, we prepare them to assume their role as mothers. We meet with them at the vaccination clinic where we make them aware of the need to protect their child against infant diseases, which are usually benign, but, in tropical countries, could turn out to be deadly. Our task mostly involves hygiene education, advice in proper nutrition and insistence on the importance of breast-feeding. The latter is in line with the slogan of a recent campaign for breast-feeding: "Lèt maman se richès ti bebe"... it is the baby's 'wealth' both physically and affectively! Often influenced by advertizing and even more so by the necessity to earn a living for themselves and their families - since they are often single mothers - women are pressured into weaning their infants prematurely, leading to the harmful consequence of malnutrition.

Haitian mothers love their children; they are proud of them and look after them often to the detriment of their own health. Hence the necessity to raise their awareness of the need to look after themselves as this has repercussions on the health of their child. Working with mothers

in a Health Centre is our lot each day and it is a gratifying way of being present among them. As a nurse, I am in contact with dozens of mothers daily by way of their sick children, and every time, I feel that I am in the presence of a value which is close to my heart: the quality of life of the people who come to me. Mother Délia used to say: "Put sunshine into the hearts of those who approach you." We can see this ray of sunshine brightening the relationship of trust daily established with those who ask for our professional assistance, a spark of love which makes us believe in life.

There are so many reasons in these encounters to give thanks to the God of life! So many reasons to believe in the future with people who believe in the value of life! Moreover, these are women who give themselves entirely because they believe in their role as mothers. For me, working with women and children means more than building an earthly city; it means contributing to life, making it grow to fulfillment and participating in the work of the Creator.

*Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.*



*For Sr. Lise Tremblay, working with women and children is a life-giving contribution.*

## AGRICULTURE, ECOLOGY AND FAITH

*A conversation between two M.I.C.s of Haitian origin: Sr. Martine Désoguste asks Sr. Marie-Lorencia Cantave a few questions concerning nature and faith, the missionary life and agriculture, and what binds these together.*

- Marie-Lorencia, are we, as missionaries, supposed to work in agriculture?
- Of course! In our contact with nature we discover the work of God Himself. By using creation wisely, we participate in God's plan and develop a greater appreciation of the blessings of ecology.
- How does one come to discover these things in nature?
- For one who has faith, God's work can be seen in the least facts of nature; the cosmos is not purely the result of cause to effect. You can discover the hand of the Creator in the tiny plant placed in the ground one day, which in a few years will produce delicious fruits such as those we're enjoying today.
- I understand. We can contribute by our work in realizing God's plan, which is to develop creation. What we're doing now is far from being a trivial task! For example, our older Sisters planted all these fruit trees. We reap the benefits today... we relish the delicious fruits! If we want others after us to benefit too, we must contribute now in improving the species!
- Our work is very important. It is along the same line as our mission: to contribute in developing agriculture in our country. As missionaries, besides transmitting the Word of God, we must encourage people to participate in Haiti's progress.
- Do you know, I understand my mission better! I realize the value of manual work and I'm also beginning to see the importance of ecology.

*Martine Désoguste, M.I.C.  
and Marie-Lorencia Cantave, M.I.C.*



*Sr. Martine Désoguste and Sr. Marie-Lorencia Cantave help to develop agriculture in their country.*

## VOCATION PROMOTION

*Lord, you who make all things new,  
Come and work wonders again today  
As the wind of the Spirit blows.*

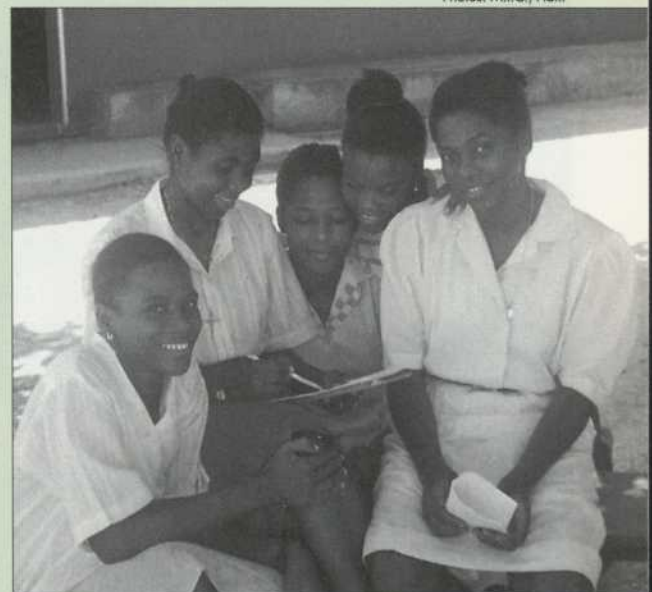
On this hopeful note I come to share with you my M.I.C. vocation promotion work in Haiti. Life as well as nature has its seasons. There can be no harvest without fall and winter, spring and summer. Speaking of vocations. I believe that we must sow in faith now to get a good harvest in the future. Commitment in vocation promotion requires patience and a new outlook to see the tiny shoots growing in different places and to prepare a favourable ground that will keep the shoots from withering in the process.

When we meet with young people, we must show them the importance of the meaning they want to give their lives, and then offer them food for thought to help them see the way. The annual vocation camp will be held again next summer. Last year, around forty young girls responded to the appeal. They were guided and motivated by the Sister in charge of vocation promotion in each fraternity. Working to awaken vocations demands a great deal of trust in the God who calls; the political, social and economic situation of our country doesn't help young people to respond generously. Despite all this, there is much hope. Our Mother Délia used to say: "It is worth the trouble of going to the ends of the world to fetch a soul that is really called to the religious and apostolic vocation; she is the precious stone of the Gospel". □

*Muriette Hilaire, M.I.C.*

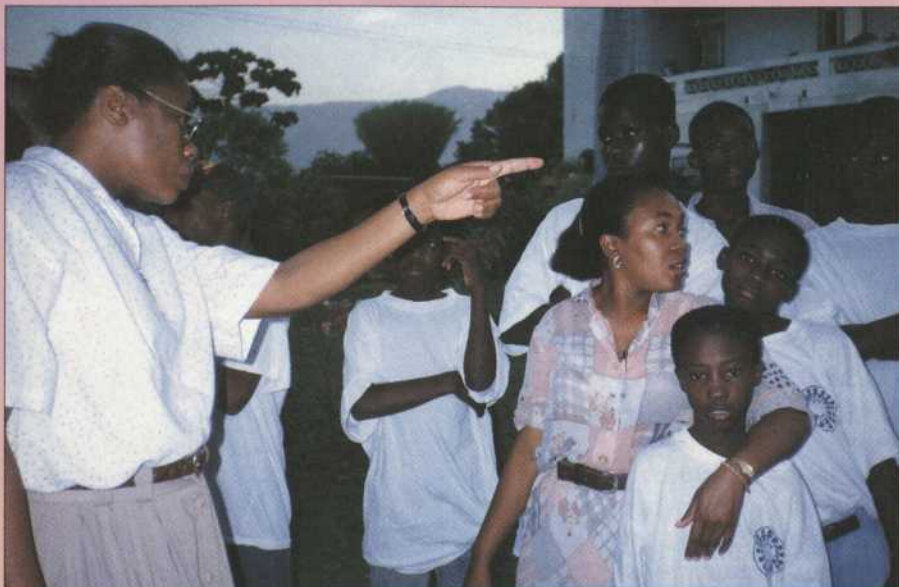
religious and apostolic vocation; she is the precious stone of the Gospel". □

Photos: M.I.C., Haiti



*Sr. Muriette Hilaire (2nd l.) at a vocation camp in Delmas*

# ALPHA a Way of Liberation



Sr. Rosenelle Lagredelle with children and a directress of the Selavi Family, a social work founded by Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

BY ROSENELLE LAGREDELLE, M.I.C.

Literacy programmes are a priority in Haiti. Learning how to read and write opens a door, a way to liberation, through which the Haitian people are enabled to lift up their heads and work actively together for full democracy in their country. Sr. Rosenelle Lagredelle, a Haitian M.I.C., participates in the service of feeding neighbours and parish members with the "bread" of an elementary education.

## LITERACY AND DEMOCRACY

**T**he rate of illiteracy in our country is very high. The dictatorship had much to gain by keeping the people in ignorance. Yet there were around five attempts on the part of the government ser-

vices, from 1944 to 1988, to apply literacy programmes. As we near the third millennium, will the experience of 1995 be the real one, giving the 85% of illiterate people the mastery of reading and writing and opening for them at last the access to education? With the return to constitutional order, the Haitian government launched the *Alpha* movement. Several organized bodies have been made aware and are motivating others. The Haitian Conference of Men and Women Religious (CHR) exhorts its members to participate actively in this effort. With an illiterate population, isn't the newborn democracy doomed from the outset? The Alpha project initiated in 1995 has a new element: it is an experience which is carried out in legality among people who are eager to participate in the affairs of the country and to build a new Haiti, dear to the hearts of its sons and daughters.

I, too, wanted to contribute my own share in this national endeavour. One Sunday, after the Eucharistic

Photos: M.I.C. Haiti



Lise Doucet, M.I.C., trains teachers for the Alpha project.

celebration, I invited the people in the assembly who had not yet had the bread of education to register if they wanted to learn how to read and write. What a joy it was for me to see more than fifty people file through! Their long-time wish was about to become a reality. The testimonies are poignant: "I can't read my daughter's letters when she writes from abroad. - I have to ask my neighbour to help me when my son sends me a cheque. - My children don't succeed in school and I can't help them at home." Several young people preparing for University came to register their parents. To the great disappointment of the last arrivals, registration was stopped after the count reached fifty.

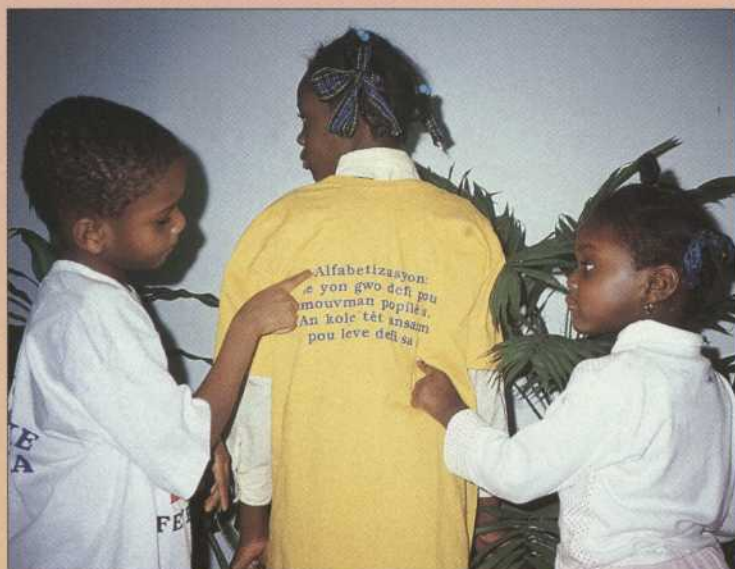
### COOPERATION AND CONTRIBUTION

Was it a daring move, did I act on an impulse, or was it the desire to reach out to the poor in their misery and give an abundance of life? But with this new responsibility, I realized I couldn't possibility get started all by myself! I turned to the Christian community and invited anyone with an education to offer their help to the literacy campaign. Fifty-five young people said they were ready to receive the training offered free of charge by the State Secretariate for Literacy. Paul Déjean, the Minister, came personally to assess what had been achieved and to give the group his encouragement and congratulations. Since we live in a country with very high unemployment rate, some people thought that this one-week session would provide the opportunity for them to work for pay at the literacy programme. Such was not the case. The Minister invited each one to get people together in their own neighbourhoods and to work with them. We promised that the literacy centers would be opened by summer, but because I had to be away for a while, this could not be done.

### A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT AND PRIDE

The experience began last October in the Renoncule Lane zone. On the day preceding the official opening, a friendly meeting was organized for all the participants. Five young volunteers attended this activity.

Illiterate people too often believe that they have no talent simply because they didn't have the chance as children to learn how to read and write. At this meeting, they were invited to tell what they brought to this group, the skills they have and are able to share with others. There came



Teaching the people how to read and write is a challenge for us all!

out a long list! These are people who ply many trades: seamstresses, housekeepers, cooks, laundry women, peasant women, farmers, labourers, beauticians... At the end, after each and everyone had shared, they had forgotten about their handicap. Each person had a sense of achievement because of what he or she knew how to do and felt like singing Magnificat! *Mèsi Bondyé!* (Thank you, Lord). The project got started... sharing makes us brothers and sisters. The Center has been functioning ever since. We were offered office space; a little later, we also received free books, pencils, exercise books and chalk. Can we mention Divine Providence? I firmly believe in it! The M.I.C. Provincial Council's financial help enables us to pay the travel expenses of the facilitators.

This group is made up mostly of women. Only five men are members of our Center, which is named *Na rive* (We'll reach our goal). Apart from the effort to learn how to read and write, the group also carries out other activities. Cooking lessons are given on a regular basis. Thus one day in December, the participants learned how to make a butter cake - a much-appreciated experience. Now, they are insisting on having lessons in sewing. "We have to clothe our children and we don't know how to sew... Even if we have to work on Saturdays, we're prepared to put in the effort."

### OPENING TO NEW AVENUES

Through this project, I discover a little more each day the potential for evangelization of those who are poor. A minor incident which happened lately got me thinking seriously. One of the participants had a death in her family. Someone in the group decided to ask the others for a contribution to give to the one in mourning. A total of \$14 Haitian was collected. This is a large sum for poor people. I added my contribution and two delegates from the group

went to visit her and offered her the amount collected. Yes, the poor evangelize us. They become more and more conscious of being the subjects and the actors of their own history.

This is an exciting experience. Like a crossroads of opportunity, the literacy programme opens the way for the advancement of women, for evangelization and for vocation and missionary promotion. It opens a way of love and fraternity... new avenues are possible. I feel that things are coming together for setting up a basic Church community. When we build something on the foundation of the worth and potential of each person, we can dream of better tomorrows for Haiti. With the *Alpha* project, this dream is becoming a reality! □

Photo: M. Marcoux, M.I.C.

# AT THE CROSSROADS



BY JOSEPH A. DAUDIER, O.M.I.

Joseph Daudier, O.M.I.

*To understand the Church in Haiti, one must place its history in the socio-political context of the country and of the major trends of the Church in Latin America. This Church, just as the country, goes through the phases of the Paschal mystery. It also longs for new life. Fr. Joseph A. Daudier, O.M.I., relates the principal events of the last twenty-five years and singles out some of the elements that have marked the Church in Haiti to this day. His is one way among others to look at the situation. We present excerpts of his text.*

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

**T**he past quarter of a century - from the first historic conference of CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Council) in 1968 to the meeting in Santo Domingo in October 1992 - has marked a decisive turn in the life of the Church in Latin America. As regards the Church in Haiti, 1972 was the year when it entered the scene. That year, the C.E.H. (Episcopal Conference of Haiti), freshly constituted in the wake of Vatican II and Medellin (1968), published the document "*L'Église dans la Cité*". This courageous, though still timid, publication coincided with the beginning of the second part of the Duvalier dictatorship. It seemed at that time that free expression would be given a certain amount of leeway! But this was a short-lived parenthesis.



*Through the ages, the Christian people of Haiti have turned to their Patroness, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.*

Photos: M.-P. Charbonneau, M.I.C.

"*L'Église dans la Cité*" was an effort on the part of the C.E.H. to grapple with the serious problems that traditionally afflicted the "somewhat feudal type" of society existing in Haiti. Among the points that were raised, we shall only mention two as examples: the precarious condition or the fragility of family life in Haiti; and, the intolerable scandal of domestic labour, which in the final analysis, was tantamount to semi-slavery. Besides, these two deplorable realities stood as sorry remnants of the colonial regime which supported slavery.

Note that the document "*L'Église dans la Cité*" broke the century-old silence of the Haitian Episcopate. This silence, which all but jeopardized the credibility of the Church in Haiti, was a by-product of the Concordat of 1860 - a bilateral

accord signed by Pope Pius IX and President Geffrard. By the very fact of becoming the official State religion, the Catholic Church was under threat. Indeed the State, by force of circumstance, always sought to silence or control the Church. This was a source of embarrassment every time the Church, in the name of the Gospel of love and liberation, had to denounce some abusive or unjust attitude of the State. (...)

The first step taken by the Church in Haiti in publishing "L'Église dans la Cité" was duly followed by other more forceful steps, from the fall of 1980 to this day. We must mention here the major declaration of the C.H.R. (Haitian Conference of Men and Women Religious) of November 28, 1980. This vigorous protest of the arrest, torture and brutal deportation of a good number of committed journalists set the tone for subsequent interventions of the C.H.R. and of the Concile des Jeunes in April 1985, and for most of the declarations issued by the T.K.L. (*Kominote Ti Legliz*), not to minimize the importance of the topical interventions of the C.E.H. - from Christmas 1980 to the year 1986, after which there were very few.

### SIGNIFICANT FACTS

When speaking of the firm interventions of the C.H.R. - which is to this day ever present by the side of our suffering people, struggling for the respect of their rights and dignity - the remarkable contribution of the Catholic radio station "Radio Soleil" established in 1979 needs to be mentioned. In the area of broadcasting, we must recall the impact of the Marian Eucharistic Congress (December 1981 to March 1983). Two major achievements are to be noted in those 15 months of intense activity in the life of our Church. First, the holding and the conclusions of the National Symposium of December 1982, which followed the statement of commitment of the Christian people of Haiti:



The Haitian delegation to COMLA V in Brazil, tries to adapt the guidelines of the Congress to their local Church.

"*Nou se Legliz; Legliz se nou*" (We are the Church and the Church is all of us!). At the end of the Symposium, the Haitian Episcopate courageously and most edifyingly "confessed" the weakness of its commitment. The Congress came to a close with the historic visit of Pope John Paul II in Port-au-Prince. Repeating the prophetic declaration of the T.K.L. leader on Christmas Day of 1982, the Holy Father, that morning of March 9, 1983, proclaimed that "Something has to change in Haiti!"

This motto became the leitmotiv or inspiration of the struggle of our Church alongside the people, culminating in the fall of the Duvalier regime on February 7, 1986. It became painfully obvious, however, that the end of the double way of the cross - the 28 years of Duvalierism, would not completely stop the evil deeds of the *tontons macoutes*. They survived and continued to wreak havoc for many years after February 7, 1986, which was only an elusive respite.

In October of 1990, a young Salesian priest gifted with incomparable eloquence and flair for the people, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, affectionately nicknamed "Titid", rekindled hope. His socio-political commitment - espe-

cially manifested in the march of April 26, 1986, on Fort Dimanche - this fortress of death appropriately called the Bastille of the Duvalier era - was welcomed by the Haitian people who longed to bring about change and a return to freedom. The news of the surprise candidacy of Jean-Bertrand Aristide hit the waves on October 18, 1990. The F.N.C.D. (*Front National pour le Changement et la Démocratie*) had chosen a man of the Church to block the road and defeat the questionable figures in power.

A priest, and a religious at that, seeking the Presidency of his country! A totally unprecedented phenomenon which bespeaks the invincible trust of our people in the institution of the Church... In the

name of faith itself, those in active commitments took a firm collective stand for the fierce struggle of the downtrodden and suffering people. Bishop Willy Romulus is known beyond our boundaries for his commitment in favour of the poor... Undeniably, the coup d'État of September 30, 1991, against the legitimate government (a democratic government for the first time in two centuries of history) powerfully contributed in the aggravation of tensions which already existed in the Church of Haiti (...).

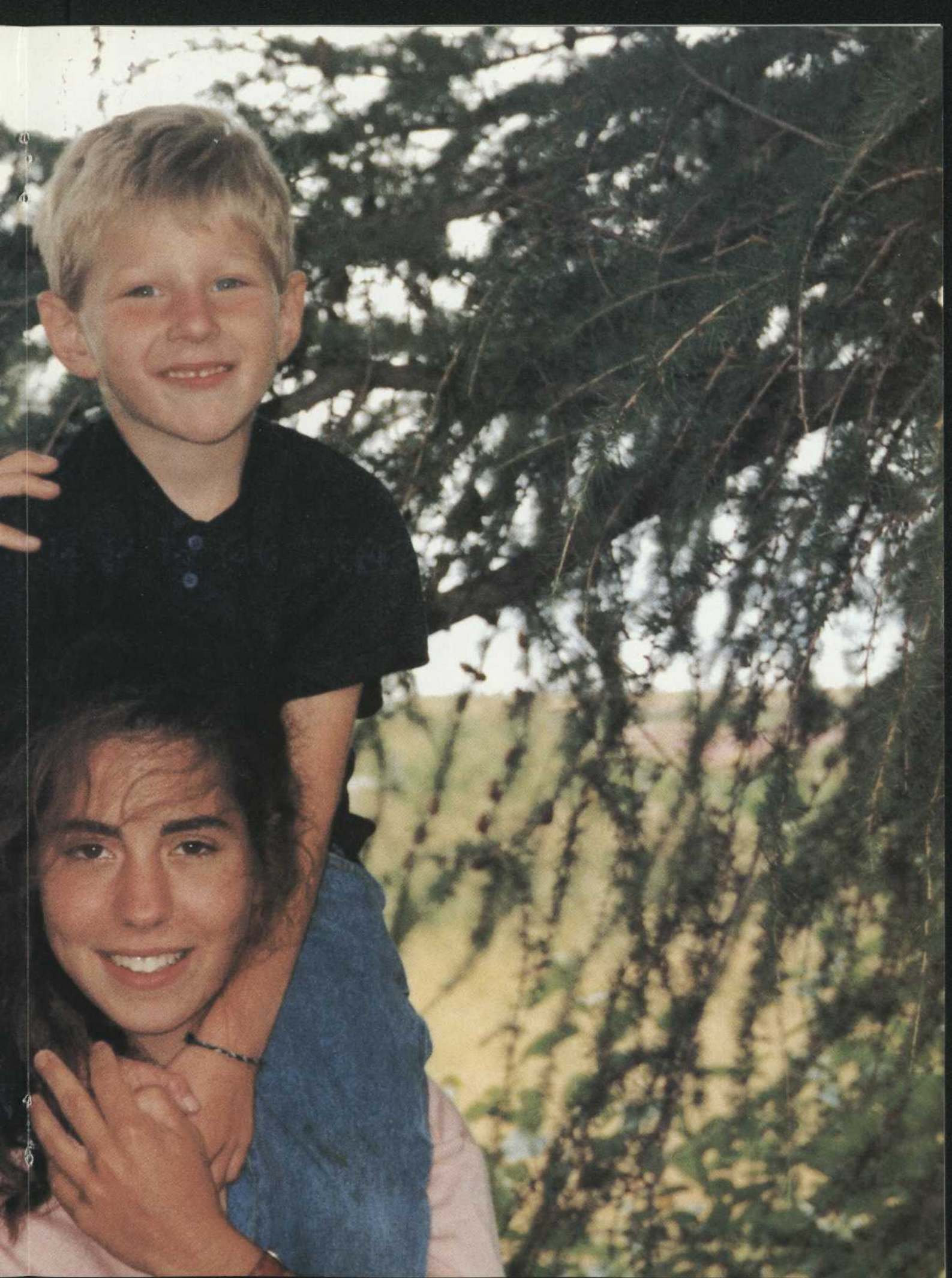
It is hoped that the Church of Christ in our country will move in the direction of its socio-political commitment, which is well received since the publication in 1972 of "L'Église dans la Cité". A few recent developments favour this orientation. First, the presence and intelligent action anticipated on the part of the new Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Christophe Pierre, the withdrawal of the "prophet" President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his replacement at the Palais National and Presidency of the country by Mr. René Préval. Ex-President Aristide keeps in the new direction of his life the will to continue the Christian commitment of our Church, which is at a crossroads in Haiti. □

A photograph of a person's arm reaching up towards a tree branch, with a large decorative letter 'T' overlaid on the top left. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green tree. The person is wearing a blue top and a pink undershirt. The lighting is natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**T**

*To see and make others see  
through the eyes of a child!*

*Christian Beaulieu*





# Gestures that Herald the Future

BY CHRISTIAN BEAULIEU

*A few months ago, Fr. Christian Beaulieu went to Haiti for his ministry. His closeness to the poor and the little ones at home and abroad enables him to read the Gospel in the light of specific gestures of the past and of the present. Such gestures are like promises, harbingers of hope heralding the future.*

In the olden days, after a harsh winter and severe sea storms that could have caused the loss of cargo, what a joy it was for those ashore when they saw a little boat coming from the cargo ship! Its arrival in port was a sign to everyone that winter was over at last, that the embargo was lifted and that the life and efforts of the seamen had overcome the worst storms. This little boat heralded the arrival of cargo ships full of wheat and wine and all sorts of necessary goods, which would come to port very shortly. They were harbingers of the future, a foretaste of what was to come.

So it is in our lives, in our loves, in our collective projects. We are often given indications of what is to come. Are we smart enough to recognize them?

## FROM BUDDING FLOWERS TO FLOWERS IN FULL BLOOM

I think of this young Haitian woman who fell in love with a man whose love life was deeply wounded: he was jealous, possessive, aggressive... With greatest sincerity of heart she tried everything to break away from this relationship which she knew was contrary to God's heart as well as against her own most sacred values. Totally unable to deal with the situation and suffering from great emotional dependence, she was completely helpless on her own.

Having exhausted all her human resources and knowing how powerless she was, she sought help from the Master of the impossible. She went to see her parish priest on a Wednesday afternoon to have a Mass celebrated for her intentions the following Saturday at eleven. She then went to church to pray for strength. She offered two dozen budding roses for the celebration of the following Saturday. On

arriving home that evening, she was murdered by this lover who constantly suspected her of something. Her funeral was held exactly three days later, that Saturday at eleven, and the roses were in full bloom.

This was a kind of intuition, a gesture indicative of realities to come, like a prophetic announcement of something beyond...

## HUNDREDS OF PROPHETIC GESTURES

I have so often witnessed such prophetic gestures in the times I spent in Haiti. I think of Arnaud, a young boy without schooling, whom the Lord had made His fiery apostle and evangelizer. He went around the country carrying the word, triggering hundreds of conversions and healing people. Lo and behold! wherever he went, springs of water flowed in the desert!

I think of Anne-Marie, barely 15, opening the door for me to visit the home for the dying of the Sisters of Mother Teresa; the people there at the point of death, the children and young victims of aids. What a feeling! She guided me to each one of them, suggesting the words to me and translating what I said into their language. I allowed her to lead me along paths that were totally unknown to me, fulfilling the word of the prophet: "The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cubs feed together with a little boy to lead them. The infant plays over the cobra's hole; into the viper's lair the young child puts his hand". Is 11:6-8

But there are hundreds of these young prophets in those countries...

What lessons could we draw for our lives from this experience in Haiti and in those countries that struggle for survival? Who will be the first ones to lend themselves to the presence and action of the Spirit? How can we not learn something from this for the new spiritual élan so eagerly awaited in many places, including our own countries of long-standing Christian tradition? From whom will this renewal of the Spirit come to renew our environments and communities of life, to sow new seeds in them and to give them structures that will be life-giving for the future? It will come from the little ones and the poor!

This is the time of the small remnant. These know they are little and frail. They are consequently more open, even in their distress, to a visitation from above. What precious treasures are buried in the depth of their poverty and fragility! This is where the Spirit dwells and works. They know from experience that all life must become frail in order to be reborn and to make a new start. Is there anything more frail than a newborn infant? Yet what a promise of life, what a dynamic force hides in a powerless little child and in the one who is poor of heart!

### **A NEW WORLD IS BEING BORN!**

A new world is being born. Whose work will it be? It will not result primarily from our efforts, as praiseworthy as they may be, nor from our pastoral restructuring or from our consultations, no matter how comprehensive they are, nor from the consolidation and deployment of our armed forces. God will only raise up this new world by using "what is weak to confound what is strong".

Yes, a new world is under way in Haiti, in Cuba, here in Quebec and elsewhere. Who will be best prepared to participate in the advent of this new world? By the power of the Spirit, men and women who are social outcasts like dust that is swept away, are shining already with the brightness of a new humanity!

At the beginning of the Church's history, men and women who were less than nothing took an active part in the advent of the new world which was under way. Such young and frail beings as Blandine, Perpetua, Felicity, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes... and yet, people with such unsuspected strength! In less than three centuries the world which germinated in the obscurity of prisons, in underground mines as well as in the silence of private homes, supplanted the old pagan world! Why would the same not happen today?

In either case, human beings devoted themselves to the service of their brothers and sisters, beginning with the little ones. This is absolutely essential! It may be the most wonderful gift one can give the world today. Nothing is more important for the future of the world, of the Church, of love, of those we cherish, of our communities, of our families. □

# In the Country of the Mariposa Lily

BY MICHELINE MARCOUX, M.I.C.

*The mariposa lily, national flower of Cuba. Last summer, Sr. Micheline Marcoux spent three weeks in Cuba, catching firsthand glimpses of the lifestyle of its people. And she wondered - How can one describe in a limited space the beauty of this country and the daily reality of people whose lives are affected by the realities of the Castro regime? She shares with us highlights of that visit, especially in Los Palacios, in Colón and Havana, where the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception have been working for nearly 50 years. The country of the mariposa lily is full of contrasts...*



*Simonne Perreault, M.I.C., Bernadeta Colazzo, M.I.C., and a friend in Los Palacios - Center: the white mariposa lily*

**N**ot a week goes by without the media presenting a story about Cuba. On this as well as on any other subject, one must keep a critical mind, for more often than not, journalists tend to report what is of interest in terms of tourism in Havana or Varadero, the boutiques, the luxurious hotels... The life of the Cuban people is something different. It is difficult to pass judgment given the complexity of a socio-political system which is so different from ours. Yet, taking a fresh look at the overall picture, what did I find most striking about the life of this country? What hope is there for the Church in Cuba, which is full of vitality, and for the activities of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception?

## SOME OF THE ATTRACTIONS OF CUBA

A country of remarkable beauty, Cuba has unique touristic attractions. Varadero is undoubtedly the best known site with its beaches of white sand and its many-hued aqua blue sea. On my way to visit our companions of Colón with M.I.C.s from Havana, we had the chance to stop there for a short while, as Varadero happened to be along our itinerary. And since I spent two weeks at the M.I.C. fraternity of Los Palacios, the Sisters arranged for me to visit other places in the Diocese of Pinar del Río such as Soroa, Las Terrazas and San Vicente. The youth activities organized at this time of the year and the trips of the pastoral team were so many opportunities for me to admire some unforgettable sights, sometimes even making a small detour, to rub shoulders with hospitable people and to discuss with open-minded young people concerned about their future or troubled by recent events, with no news from relatives or friends gone to sea aboard makeshift boats.

Homage is paid all over Cuba to Jose Marti, a poet. There are busts of this national hero almost everywhere. The International Youth Festival in August is marked by socio-political and cultural activities organized throughout the Island. Many countries send official delegations; there is a youth delegation from Quebec. President Fidel Castro takes the opportunity to reaffirm the goals of the



*A celebration in Paso Quemado with Fr. Joseph Boctenk, Pastor of Los Palacios, and Sr. Bernadeta (l.)*

Revolution and the orientations of his government.

### A SPECIAL PERIOD

People usually talk about a "special period", using, it seems, a phrase coined by the governing authorities. The economic support of the ex-USSR has been discontinued since the fall of this pillar of the Communist world, and this affects the frail economy of Cuba. The policies established after the Revolution have been eased somewhat, which has brought about a few changes. It is now possible for people in Cuba to have a small handicraft or bakery shop by the roadside or in Havana or the Malécon, against payment of some kind of dues or rental. The most outstanding change is undoubtedly the fact that the people are now allowed to shop in stores catering to tourists. You find everything in these stores... if you pay with American dollars. In the regular Cuban stores, the people continue getting items of basic necessity with their rationing booklets. Supply is a real problem. The wages are low; therefore unless one has family members abroad, who can afford to shop at the tourists' stores? What a surprise it was for me to see my companions all excited over onions - what a treat for them! Last summer, it took 35 Cuban pesos for one American dollar. A medical specialist earns between 400 and 600 pesos a month. The people work very hard to earn enough money for food and clothing; the upkeep of outdoor property is a secondary concern. Neighbours help one another and make a special effort to welcome visitors.

### VITALITY OF THE CHURCH

The Church has never ceased to be present among the people even after the Revolution. Thanks to grandparents, the faith has been handed down. On my visits to some parishes, these elders, often women, pillars of the Church, were introduced to me. One can feel that there is a greater freedom of worship. The churches are filled with young people and many are involved as catechists. The children bring their parents to church. In Los Palacios, a six-year-old girl insisted on following catechism lessons in the

parish. Her mother went with her and let her go in alone. One day, she stayed with her child. Some time later, what a joy for Simonne Perreault, M.I.C., to see the little one holding her father's hand at the rear of the church. Since then, this couple has received catechetical instruction. They got married and are now in charge of ministering to other couples in the parish.

The international pastoral team of Los Palacios is a living witness to the universal dimension of the Church; the members of this team are Fr. Joseph Bocktenk, of German origin, Pastor of the parish, and three M.I.C.s of different nationalities: Bernadeta Colazzo, of Cuba, Catherine Raveronomenhahary, from Madagascar, and Simonne Perreault, from Canada. The laity are involved and a variety of pastoral activities are offered. In addition to the parish celebrations, the team serves the neighbouring areas, sometimes in private homes, as is the case in Paso Quémado and in López Peña. During the holidays, two youth gatherings were held in Bahia Honda and Candélaría, in churches pastored by two Canadian priests of the Foreign Mission Society. The family of a catechist hosted the entire team in La Comadore to prepare the youth gathering of Candélaría. The scenery is magnificent in the mountains and in every Cuban family, even the poorest, there is warm hospitality... which always includes the ultimate courtesy of a cup of espresso coffee. A real delight!

In Colón, Havana and Holguín, until its recent closing, youth activities are still a priority, without neglecting the other forms of apostolate. M.I.C. formation is also important for future generations. Despite a difficult situation, there are many vocations and several of the candidates are professional women: a dentist, an architect, a journalist. The M.I.C. Province of Cuba includes nearly twenty Cuban sisters, one Malagasy and four Canadians: Jeanne Ostiguy and Simonne Perreault - two pioneers, Claire Carrier and the most recent arrival, Agnès Bouchard. Though the mission field is immense and the labourers are few, Sr. Amélia Mejides, Provincial Superior, accepted to share, as the poor do, with the Church of Canada by appointing Sr. Jacqueline Brage to this country. Respectful of the flow of history and with the patience required when sowing the seed, faith is growing again in Cuba, on the strength of the reality of the Paschal mystery! □

*People bring their rationing booklets to the Cuban store. Claire Carrier, M.I.C., buys what is needed for the retreat house in Colón.*



Photos: M. Marcoux, M.I.C.



*Amélia Mejides, M.I.C., Provincial Superior, (2nd l.) and the M.I.C. group of Colón*



**MA. ANTHEA RASO, M.I.C.**  
FROM LA PAZ, ILOILO  
DIOCESE OF JARO, PHILIPPINES.  
RETURNED TO CANADA  
IN JANUARY 1996.



**GISÈLE GUINOIS, M.I.C.**  
FROM ST-LÉONARD-DE-PORT-AURICE,  
DIOCESE OF MONTREAL.  
RETURNED TO PERU  
IN JANUARY 1996.



**MONIQUE FORTIER, LAY MISS.**  
FROM EAST-ANGUS,  
DIOCESE OF SHERBROOKE.  
LEFT FOR BOLIVIA  
IN JANUARY 1996.



**ELMIRE ALLARY, M.I.C.**  
FROM STE-MÉLANIE,  
DIOCESE OF JOLIETTE.  
RETURNED TO PERU  
IN JANUARY 1996.

# MISSIONARIES OF THE GOSPEL

*"As the Father sent me,  
so I am sending you"*

*Jn 20, 21*



**LORRAINE FALARDEAU, M.I.C.**  
FROM LORETTEVILLE,  
DIOCESE OF QUEBEC.  
RETURNED TO PERU  
IN FEBRUARY 1996.



**MONIQUE LAROUCHE, M.I.C.**  
FROM VILLE-DE-LA-BAIE,  
DIOCESE OF CHICOUTIMI.  
LEFT FOR CHILE IN MARCH 1996  
AFTER WORKING IN PERU AND BOLIVIA.



**LUCILLE GRENIER, M.I.C.**  
FROM ST-LIGUORI,  
DIOCESE OF JOLIETTE.  
RETURNED TO JAPAN  
IN MARCH 1996.



**JACQUELINE BRAGE GARCIA, M.I.C.**  
FROM SANTA CRUZ DEL SUR,  
DIOCESE OF CAMAGUEY, CUBA.  
MISSIONARY ANIMATION  
IN CANADA  
IN JULY, 1996.

# To You, Lady Mary

**Our Lady  
of Transparency,**  
God speaks to us  
in you and through you:  
grant us simplicity of heart  
and fill us with gladness.

**Virgin of the Fiat and of the Magnificat,**  
give our hearts  
the transparency of your heart.

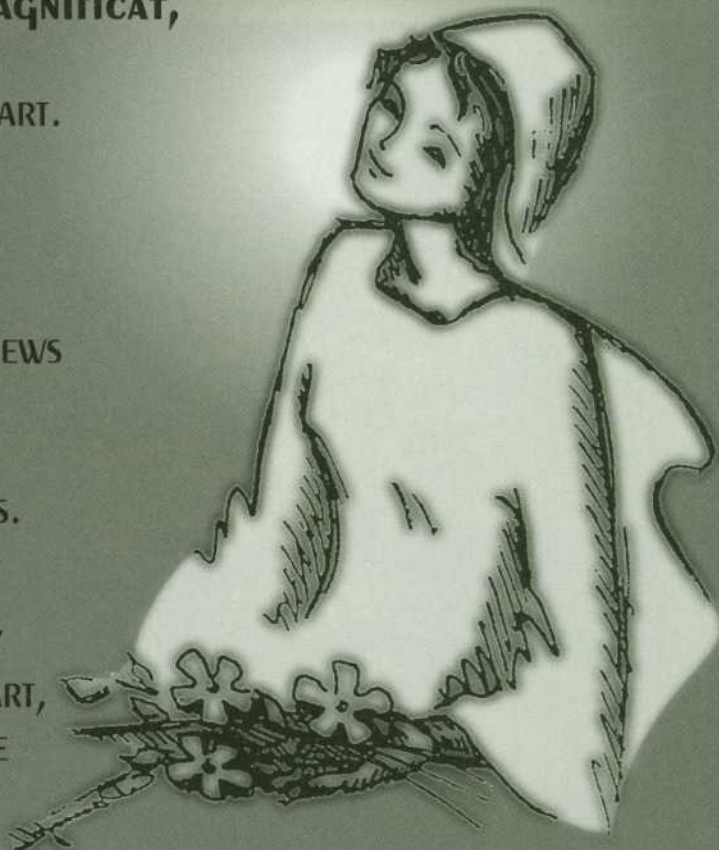
**Our Lady of Humility,**  
hidden in the crowd,  
wrapped in mystery,  
help us to bring the Good News  
to the world  
and to communicate it  
to our brothers and sisters.

**Our Lady of Fidelity,**  
who accepted the mystery  
and pondered it in your heart,  
you were the very example  
of constancy in trial  
as well as in exaltation.

Help us to keep our commitments  
as good and faithful servants,  
to the very last day  
of our life on earth.

We shall thus render glory to God  
and offer Him thanksgiving  
now and forever.

John Paul II



# On a Mission in Canada

BY JACQUELINE BRAGE, M.I.C.

The Greater Montreal area is known for its cosmopolitan environment. Ville St-Laurent is one example. Several of the schools in this area have a mostly ethnic population where all cultures are represented. The parishes are also enriched by this reality. Sr. Jacqueline Brage, a Cuban, was recently assigned to work with the local Latin-American community. She shares her experience as a missionary in Canada, especially among young people born in Central America. A few of her young friends candidly talk about their values and some discoveries they've made in their new milieu.

## SERVING IN YOUTH MINISTRY

It is always a pleasure to share a missionary experience. Even more so when this experience is a gift of the Lord, for me a totally unexpected gift!

I came to Canada in July 1994 to study at the *Institut de Formation Humaine et Intégrale de Montréal (IFHIM)*. The M.I.C. fraternity to which I belong is in the parish of *Notre-Dame de Bois-Franc* in Ville St-Laurent, where the Latin American Christian community of Santa Rosa has its home. The two communities occupy the same facilities and the celebrations are carried out either in French or in Spanish. In September, the priest in charge of the Spanish-speaking community expressed the desire that I should help out in some area or other of the parish. I chose to work with young people because in Cuba this was one of my favourite activities and it gave me a lot of courage and hope. I've always considered young people to be the future of the Church and of society, but working with them and for them requires time and patience.

In Canada, it isn't easy for me to combine time for study with time for facilitating a youth group. But I now realize all that I receive and learn by doing so. There is a big difference between the young people of my country and those here! Of course the challenges may be the same, but the situation is completely

**Multicultural team in Ville St-Laurent:**  
"The fact of being immigrants gives their life a different colour. They are like transplanted trees."



different. The fact of being immigrants already gives their lives a different colour. They are like transplanted trees. Some of them came here as young children; the others, when they were older. Naturally this has repercussions on them. There are also the challenges of lifestyle and family, which at times haven't changed as readily as they have. For some of these young people, things don't always turn out the way they would have wanted.

In this ministry among the youth, I experience how being open to other cultures has broadened my vision of things and enriched my missionary life. This is why I wish to share with you some of the opinions expressed by my young friends. This will be an opportunity for you, as it is for me, to open your heart more and to give thanks to God for the wonderful people these youth are and for the values they discover in the people who welcome them as their own. These young people, between 15 and 21, are from various social milieus of Ville St-Laurent and also of Montreal and Pierrefonds; they are high school, college and university students.

### RICHNESS OF A MOSAIC OF CULTURES

A few characteristics of the different cultures expressed by members of the group:

- We are very cheerful and we love to have friends. We are friendly and hospitable. Family and unity are very important to us.  
*El Salvador*
- We feel for other people and we love to help those who are poorer than ourselves. The family atmosphere is an important value for us.  
*Venezuela*
- The Peruvian people are persevering, they struggle hard and are welcoming.  
*Peru*
- We love unity and friendship.  
*Honduras*

**These young people from various countries of Latin America form new friendships in Canada.**

Knowing who they are and the values they cherish, they share their contribution here and now:

- I share my joy with others; I am sociable and I always look for the bright side of things.

*Maritza, Peru*

- I offer my help and I help those around me.

*Yamile, Venezuela*

- I share my sincere friendship and help others materially and spiritually.

*Clarivel, El Salvador*

- I offer everyone understanding, friendship and sincerity.

*Claudia, El Salvador*

- I communicate joy and peace.

*Lily, Honduras*

- I give affection, friendship and love to those who need it and I establish relationships with them.

*Cesar, El Salvador*

- I put love and warmth in everything I do.

*Maria, El Salvador*

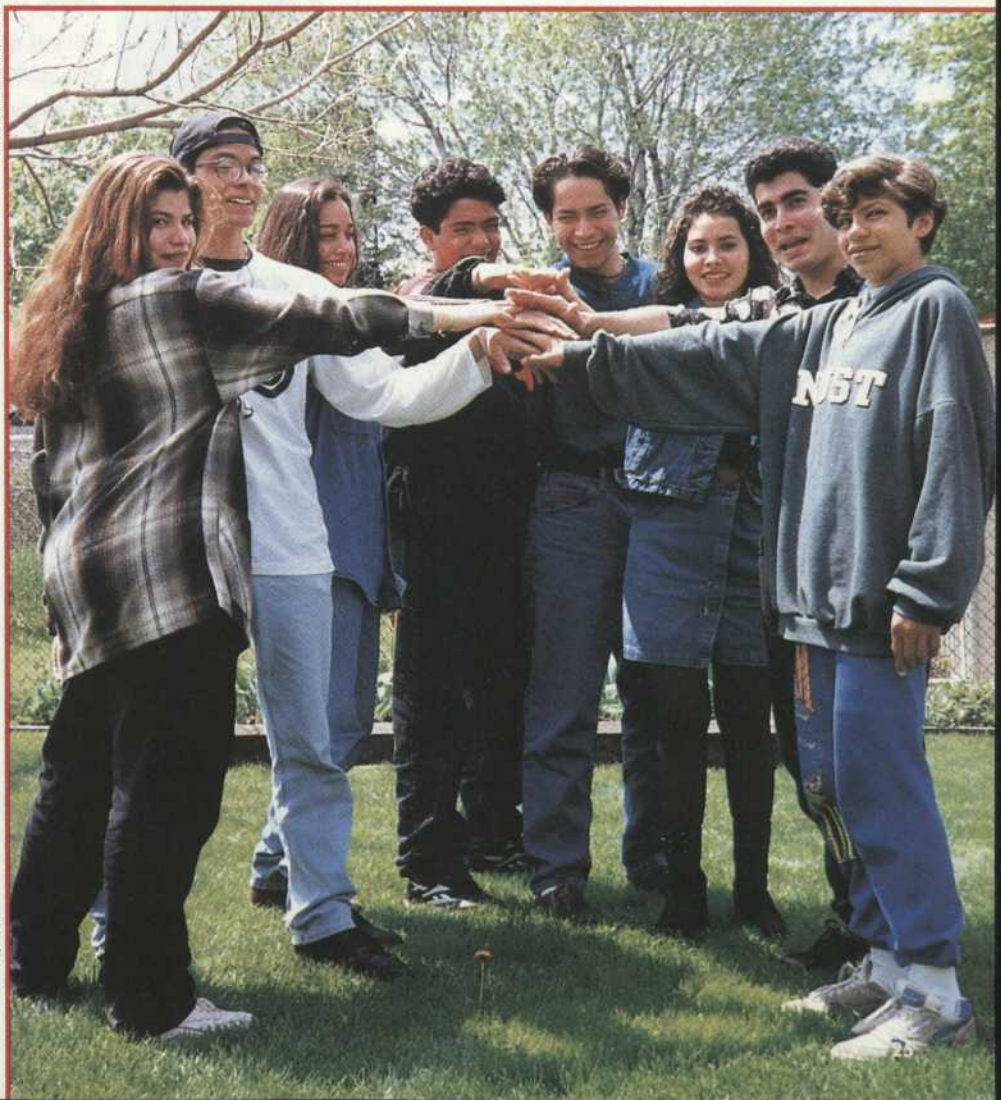
### VALUES DISCOVERED IN THE NEW MILIEU

- The people are pleasant, attentive, understanding and available to help those in need.
- They are interested in finding out about our countries of origin and our customs.
- They share their knowledge joyfully and patiently.
- We are given the possibility to study.
- We feel free and without fear.

I believe that living in a multicultural context is a very great richness, for it reveals to us that beyond our differences, there exists a point where the human person is one - the masterpiece of all Creation! □

Translated from Spanish by  
Véronique Bernatchez, M.I.C.

Photos: M. Marcoux, m.i.c.



# In the Glory of the Risen Lord

Photo: M. H. Roy, M.I.C.

## Sister Socorro Carvajal

Our Sister Socorro Carvajal was carried off most unexpectedly by typhoid fever on August 20, 1995. She was 49 years old and had been a religious for 22 years.

Born in the Island of Mindanao in the Philippines on March 5, 1946, she was the second child of a family of twelve. Having successfully completed her studies and taught for a few years, she decided to become a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception. Once a professed religious, she devoted herself entirely to an apostolic project among the Tribal Minority groups of Malita, Davao del Sur. For seven years, nothing stopped her courageous missionary spirit from reaching the tribal people and helping them to develop in dignity. Then in Gagalangin, Manila, she served as



superior of the M.I.C. local community and manifested her apostolic zeal in various ministries: as mission animator, in charge of the Japanese-sponsored students, and as coordinator of the Grade School and High School Christian Life Education programmes in Immaculate Conception Academy of Manila.

Appointed principal of the Elementary department at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy in Mati, Davao Oriental, in 1995, she was struck down by the sudden illness. The news of her death at the hospital in Davao City filled everyone with great sadness. The Lord who had been the support and hope of Sr. Socorro, received His faithful servant for the eternal Magnificat. □

Georgette Barrette, M.I.C.

## Sister Yvonne Jolicoeur (St-Camille-de-Lellis)

Sister Yvonne was born in St-Thomas de Joliette on December 17, 1904. Gifted in music, she obtained her superior diploma in piano at the age of 20. She was deeply influenced by the reading of a life of Christ. After a certain amount of struggle, she joined the M.I.C.s in 1927.

She left for China shortly after her first profession and made her final vows in Tsungming in 1935. In this mission, she taught music to the Theresian Sisters, a Chinese congregation. She visited and cared for the sick, brought abandoned babies to the orphanage, organized festivities, etc. She kept on with her ministry, experienced the sufferings of war for a few years, and finally left China in 1948. Her subsequent stay in the



Philippines allowed her to continue using her musical talents as a teacher and as incharge of a music department.

Having returned to her home country in 1971, she served her sisters in Pont-Viau and in Joliette especially as a hairdresser. She went back to Pont-Viau to live the last three years of her life and prepare for her great departure, which happened on September 17, 1995. In her generosity of heart, she wished to love all creatures "as Christ would". She had great confidence in Mary and lived her Fiat and her Magnificat. Eager and waiting, she wrote at the end of her journey: "This way, my Saviour, I'm waiting for you." □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

## Sister Jacqueline Taillon (St-Armand)

Sr. Jacqueline left us with the memory of a woman whose temperament and character were those of an artist. She was noted for her spirit of faith, her charity, courage, simplicity, thoughtfulness and sense of wonder at Beauty. She was born in Montreal on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1929. Led by the call to the foreign missions revealed to her during visits at her school by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, she entered the novitiate of Pont-Viau at the age of 18. She made her profession of vows on February 11, 1950.

After being involved in musical activities for a few years, she was assigned to the mission of Cuba in 1959. The advent of the Communist regime forced her return to Canada two years later. She went on to perfect her studies in music, which she taught for a while, and was then appointed to a service of authority in Pont-Viau. In 1971, she left for the Philippines where she served in community



services in a few M.I.C. houses. She then returned to Canada for a temporary stay in 1977, after which she went back to the Philippines to take on a service of authority in Davao until 1985. Having returned to Quebec, she employed all her talents at the Solitude Délia-Tétreault in St-Sulpice.

Having moved to Pont-Viau in 1992, Sr. Jacqueline graced the house with her talent as an organist until she had reached the limit of her strength. When the illness that consumed her was diagnosed, she knew that the Lord was calling her to the ultimate passage. A priest friend who spoke at her funeral said of her: "Like the wise virgin who took a supply of oil, preparing her heart to welcome the Spouse, she too prepared to meet Him". Sr. Jacqueline died on August 28, 1995, at the age of 66, having lived 48 years in the religious life. □

Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

## Sister Louise Guimond (Marie-de-Bethléem)

Born in St-François-Xavier-des-Hauteurs near Rimouski on October 29, 1915, the daughter of Diodore Guimond and Eva Nadeau, Sister Louise was the fourth child in the family. At 14, she was a boarder at the École Apostolique of Rimouski. At 16, she applied at our novitiate of Pont-Viau, wishing "to save as many souls as possible". Immediately after her profession, she was appointed assistant to the mistress of novices and continued for 28 years being assigned to this service, giving special help at the sewing department. Later, she went to Madagascar where she served with great missionary devotion from 1965 to 1979.

She then returned to Pont-Viau to help with various services and proved to be at all times a totally devoted and



joyful companion, despite an illness which, without her realizing it, was gradually sapping her strength. When, in 1995, Sr. Louise quoted her physician saying: "The illness is following its course", she added: "I am completely at peace. (...) Everything that makes me think of death speaks to me very deeply and makes me feel good. (...) I thank the Holy Spirit for coming to pray with me." Her beautiful soul went to the Lord on

September 30, 1995.

It had long been her hope to sing hymns of thanksgiving with the angels. Our faith leads us to believe that her great desire is now realized and that, with her lovely voice, she glorifies the Lord who was always her great love. □

Fabienne Bernatchez, M.I.C.

## Sister Cécile Sansoucy (Marie-de-Gethsémani)

Born in St-Ours-sur-Richelieu on September 28, 1904, our Sister Cécile grew up happily in a beautiful family of 12 children. While still a child, she already thought of becoming a missionary. Her dream came true when she turned 21 and entered the novitiate in Pont-Viau.

In 1928, she left for southern Japan, where she devoted herself for four years in our missions of Naze and Kagoshima which were then in their beginnings. Forced to return to her home country because of illness, she later recovered and rendered various services mostly in Granby, during a period of 21 years, and in various M.I.C. houses in Québec. A skilful seamstress that she was, she excelled in making habits for the sisters and uniforms for the students as well as in sewing for the parish.



Her skill served her well also in Joliette where she was in charge of a missionary sewing center in the 50's and 60's. She later returned to Joliette to spend the last years of her life, giving her share of service inasmuch as her strength would permit.

Sr. Cécile was a congenial woman, welcoming everyone with a smile; she was very gentle and radiated peace. She drew her inspiration and dynamism from her favourite devotions: the Eucharist and Mary. Prayer occupied a major space in her life, a committed prayer expressed in the continuous recitation of the Rosary for the great intentions of the Church and of the world. She fell asleep in the Lord at the Délia-Tétreault Pavilion on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1995. □

Jeanne Guinois, M.I.C.

# NEWS OF OUR SISTERS...

## CANADA

Last February, the staff of the M.I.C. MISSIONARY PRESS celebrated the 50 years of religious life and the 25 years of service to the magazine LE PRÉCURSEUR of Sr. Fleur-Ange L'Heureux. Her present work at the Promotion Secretariate, that of writing to the collaborators of the magazine, inspires and motivates her. The simple celebration was an occasion for her to recall many memories - her vocation, her mission.

### IN RESPONSE TO HIS CALL

The harvest is great and the workers few... This word of the Gospel is still true today. Jesus chooses apostles whom He plans to send to His field. Who will listen to His voice? Who will respond to His call? Like Matthew the Apostle, I was chosen by the Lord to go and work in His vineyard when I was working at the Income Tax Office in Montreal. Even though I worked with a wonderful team, the call of Jesus was so strong that, on August 8, 1943, I left everything and joined the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

## HERE AND ABROAD

After three wonderful years with them, I was again chosen to go and replace a sick companion in Bolivia. Another three years living among such grateful and charming students. The altitude of the Andes forced my return to Canada. Who would replace me?

With my sights set on the same ideal, to make Jesus known, I continue my apostolate since May 15, 1971, by working at our missionary magazine, LE PRÉCURSEUR... 25 years already, and 50 years of religious life! Praise the Lord with me! Young people, all of you, boys and girls, I have a little piece of advice for you: Pay attention to the Holy Spirit. He will whisper in your ear what Jesus is expecting of you. My wish for you is that you may be as happy as I have been! □

Fleur-Ange L'Heureux, M.I.C.

The M.I.C. Center of Quebec offers language courses to newly-arrived immigrants. Teachers from other communities also work at this Center. Sister Monique Breton shares with us an experience she lived with one of her students.

### WHEN SOUN FIRST HEARD OF GOD

Yesterday, as I always do, I helped Soun, a special second grader, to read and understand a short text. The text was a letter written by a young boy on vacation. This boy wrote to his uncle to tell him how much he appreciated nature, the trees, the mountain, the blue lake, and said to him quite simply: "It makes me very joyful to see the earth which is so beautiful and I think about God who loves us."

When we come across words that are more difficult, I often take her French-Cambodian dictionary and show them to her. She reads and then says to me: "Yes, I understand; it is just as you said". When I came

Photo: R. Coymoy



Staff members of the M.I.C. Missionary Press and Simone L'Heureux, M.I.C., (standing, 1st r.) surround Sr. Fleur-Ange L'Heureux (3rd r.), the jubilant!

My only goal was to make Jesus Christ known to those who don't know Him. Jesus responded to my desire by choosing me, on August 15, 1951, to go into His field in Cuba. When Fidel Castro took over all our schools, on May 15, 1961, thirty-one missionaries including myself, returned to the Mother House. Following the wise counsel of Jesus who said: If you are not received in one city, go to another, I had the great privilege of leaving in January 1963 for a new country, Chile, in the freezing cold of Antarctica! The hearts of the Chilean people, however, and their welcome were so warm!



Sr. Monique Breton and Soun at the M.I.C. Center for Immigrants, Quebec

Photo: T. Lortie, M.I.C.

to the word *God*, I asked her: "Do you know what *God* means? - No, she said. - *God* is a difficult word to explain... *God* is the One who made all these beautiful things. He is very powerful. We can't see Him, but He sees us. He loves us. He loves you... He loves me. Look in your dictionary and see what it says about *God*." The dictionary only gave the word *god*. So I said to her: "This *god* is not the *God* I'm talking about." She looked at the definition and said: "No, this is not what you're saying."

Today we read the text again and, as I do with many verbs, I went over the sentence with her, conjugating the verb: "I think of God who loves me. You think of God who loves you. He..." I caught myself saying: "We often call Him the good Lord because He is our Father". She looked at me at this point wide-eyed and said: "I didn't know God before. (silence)

- Since when do you know God?
- Since yesterday!" □

Monique Breton, M.N.D.A.

## HAITI

Nothing was too small for our Mother Foundress, *Délia Tétreault*: her noble soul wanted even domestic animals to be cared for properly as creatures of God. She thus advised the Sister who fed the cat to look after it well. "These poor animals, she said, will have nothing but their cat lives in return for the services they render. Let us try to make their life as pleasant as possible." Following her example, *Germaine Veilleux, M.I.C.*, shares her adventure in saving the life of a *kabrit* ( young goat) with the help of *Lise Tremblay, M.I.C.*

### NOTHING IN THIS LIFE IS SMALL

One day, I went to Chantal for a few days' vacation. A few hours after my arrival, someone came in to say that a mother goat had just given birth to a kid and died shortly after. The question was, would the little one survive without its mother? Sr. Lise Tremblay, Directress of the dispensary, is accustomed

to saving lives. She wanted to save the young female goat; she brought out a baby bottle and some milk and began to feed it. She then gave it to me to care for during my holidays. I was amazed at the beauty of this little animal which already managed on its own and gambled about only a few hours after its birth. Every time it heard my voice, it bleated at me. There I was in contemplation of creation, giving thanks to the Lord for making such lovely creatures. Here in Haiti, I find many reasons to give thanks: the beauty of a sunset, the splendor of the ocean, a beautiful starry sky and the

coconut trees swaying in the moonlight. After a few days, I went back to Port-Salut with *Chérie*, my goat.



*What a joy it was for Sr. Germaine to save this kabrit!*

*This poor woman is happy to do her little part and brings in grass.*



Photos: M.I.C. Haiti



*Calomina, a poor woman of Chantal, carries all she owns!*

As I look after the poor who knock on our door, a very old woman once came to see me. *Chérie* was right behind me. "Oh! what a lovely little kabrit! the woman said. I'm going to bring her some grass." Every other day, she brought the kabrit all sorts of leaves to eat. In return, I gave my new friend rolls and coffee. At night, when I untied *Chérie*, she'd skip about and dance joyfully for me. A month later, I brought her back in great shape to Sister Lise. Whenever I am in Chantal, *Chérie* recognizes me; she bleats and pulls on her rope to come to me. Yes, all one needs to save a life is a little love and a lot of patience! □

Germaine Veilleux, M.I.C.

# INTERACTION

HELLO,

SUMMER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. RELAX A MOMENT WHILE READING YOUR MAGAZINE. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COMPLETE YOUR INFORMATION ON HAITI, CUBA AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRIES? THIS PAGE IS FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM. DON'T FORGET YOUR MISSIO SHARING MEETINGS. PLEASANT READING UNDER THE SUN OF THE WEST INDIES!

## MATCHING SKILLS

Invent a matching game in the form of a televised quiz.

- |  |                          |                     |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Porto Rico                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | a) Havana           |
| 2. Another name for the West Indies Ocean                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | b) Mariposa         |
| 3. Official language - Cuba                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | c) Fidel Castro     |
| 4. National flower - Haiti                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | d) Lesser Antilles  |
| 5. Capital - Haiti   | <input type="checkbox"/> | e) Caribbean Ocean  |
| 6. Currency - Cuba   | <input type="checkbox"/> | f) Gourde           |
| 7. Tourist spot - Cuba   | <input type="checkbox"/> | g) Spanish          |
| 8. Spoken language - Haiti                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | h) Port-au-Prince   |
| 9. President of the Republic - Cuba                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | i) Peso             |
| 10. Currency - Haiti   | <input type="checkbox"/> | j) Rémi Préval      |
| 11. Capital - Cuba   | <input type="checkbox"/> | k) Hibiscus         |
| 12. National flower - Cuba                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | l) Creole           |
| 13. President of the Republic - Haiti                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | m) Varadero         |
| 14. Guadeloupe, Martinique, Barbados, Dominica, Trinidad, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> | n) Greater Antilles |

## MYSTERY PHOTO

Identify the mascot of Timoun Misyonè (center) by placing the letters in order: N-I-Z-A-M E-O-S-Y-L

Answers on  
page 31 Good  
Luck!



Photo: M.-P. Charbonneau, M.I.C.

## "MISSIO" SHARING

- Using a map, an atlas or your dictionary, find the West Indies (also called Antilles) - the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles, and among these, find Haiti and Cuba. Also, find the countries of Central America.
  - Do you know anyone here who is from those countries or who has been there? Ask them about those countries and about the living conditions of the people.
  - Do you know any of the missionaries in those countries? Have you been in touch with them in any way? letter writing, prayer, project...
- Learning how to read and write is like opening a door, like turning on a light at night. Whether you are in Haiti or anywhere else, literacy is a way to freedom! (pp. 12-13)
  - Make a list of all the advantages you enjoy because you know how to read and write.
  - Give thanks to the Lord for the gift of education.
  - To help people to read and write is to help them stand on their own two feet and to give them dignity! Illiteracy also exists here in this country ; there are old people, even young ones, who don't know how to read or write.
  - Find out if there are any in your area.
  - Look with others for things you might do, on a volunteer basis, to improve their situation.
- Those who have recently come to our country are rich in values and they wish to discover those treasured by the country that welcomes them. Is there anything you might do to help these people and families of other cultures to fit into your environment, your parish... as you would like to be received if you were far from your loved ones? (pp. 24-25)
- Fr. Christian Beaulieu gives us food for thought concerning prophetic gestures in our world, gestures that give some indication of the future. (pp. 18-19)
  - Can you add some examples to the list he gives?
  - What is your personal contribution in making our world more alive?
  - How can you respond to the invitation of Pope John Paul II to young people to become prophets of life and joy? (p. 32)
- Read again in silence and with humility the prayer to Mary for her help. (p. 23)

If you wish to contact us,  
here are a few addresses:

**CANADA:**

THE GENERALATE  
AND MISSION PROCURE  
121, Maplewood Avenue  
Outremont, Qc Canada  
H2V 2M2 (514) 274-5691

CENTRE D'ANIMATION MISSIONNAIRE  
314, Chemin Ste-Catherine  
Outremont, Qc Canada  
H2V 2B4 (514) 495-1551

OFFICE OF THE DÉLIA TÉTREAU CAUSE  
100, Place Juge-Desnoyers  
Pont-Viau, Laval, Qc Canada  
H7G 1A4 (514) 663-6460

**AFRICA:**

PROVINCIAL HOUSE  
P.O. Box 47, Mzimba  
Malawi, Central Africa

**CUBA:**

Calle 146, No 904 - Entre 9 y 11  
Mariano 16, Ciudad de la Habana  
Cuba, 12100

**HAITI:**

MAISON PROVINCIALE (DELMAS)  
C.P. 1085, Port-au-Prince  
Haïti, Les Antilles

**HONG KONG:**

PROVINCIAL HOUSE  
Good Hope Convent  
381, Jat's Incline  
Kowloon, Hong Kong

**JAPAN:**

PROVINCIAL HOUSE  
8-13-16 Fukazawa, Setagaya Ku  
Tokyo 158, Japan

**MADAGASCAR:**

MAISON PROVINCIALE  
Lot II-J-4 bis, Ivandry  
Antananarivo, Madagascar 101

**PHILIPPINES:**

PROVINCIAL HOUSE  
P.O. Box 468, 1502 Greenhills  
Metro Manila, Philippines

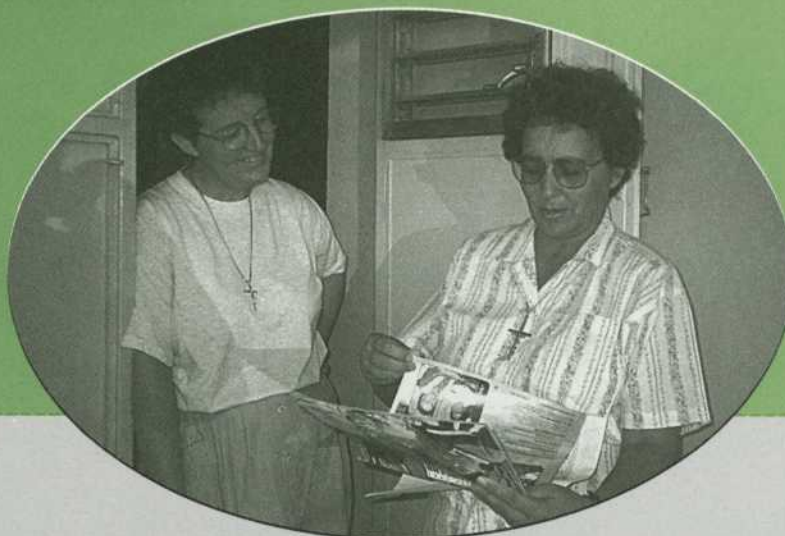
**SOUTH AMERICA:**

CASA PROVINCIAL  
Francisco de Orellana 338  
Lima 5  
Perú, América del Sur

**TAIWAN:**

PROVINCIAL HOUSE  
30, Lane 148,  
Fu Hsing South Road, Section 2  
Taipei 106, Taiwan, R.O.C.

INTERACTION: ANSWERS OF PAGE 30  
Matching Game: 1n, 2e, 3g, 4k, 5h, 6i, 7m, 8l, 9c, 10f,  
11a, 12b, 13j, 14d  
MYSTERY PHOTO: Zanmi Soléy



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*Gloria Pérez Pupo, M.I.C., (center) animates a  
meeting of young people in Matanzas, Cuba*

Photo: M. Marcoux, M.I.C.

## ***Prophets of Life and of Joy***

*You young people naturally and instinctively make of the "will to live" the horizon  
of your dreams and the rainbow of your hopes, I ask you to become "prophets of life".*

*Life is a talent entrusted to us, to be transformed and multiplied,  
by making it a gift to others. (cf. Mt 25, 14-30)*

*Love opens wide our eyes and our hearts ... I ask you also to be "prophets of joy".  
"The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide  
coming generations with reasons for living and hoping." (Gaudium et spes, 31)*

***May Mary, star of evangelization, be your guide!***

*John-Paul II, Message to the youth of the world on the occasion of the XI World Youth Day, 1996*

**DOES THE LIFE OF A RELIGIOUS OR LAY MISSIONARY INTEREST YOU?**

**DO YOU WISH TO DISCERN THE LORD'S CALL WITHIN YOU?**

**CONTACT THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.**

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