

Introduction



On November 1, 1982, “a valiant man of God died, but a saint was born.”¹ This statement by Father John Croston, C.S.C., about the death of Bishop Vincent McCauley, C.S.C., at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, heralded the end of a gallant life. Many men and women in history could rightly be given the appellation “valiant,” yet it is a term, not widely applied, that is given to those few people whose lives positively impact the world through dedication, hard work, and perseverance. Such was the life of Vincent Joseph McCauley, a man from simple roots who, while maintaining his simplicity of life and action, achieved greatness through concern for and service to people on three continents.

Vincent McCauley’s early life was a foreshadowing of his simple but efficacious work as a priest and bishop. Born and raised in the Midwest community of Council Bluffs, Iowa, McCauley came from a strong Catholic family with traditional religious practices of the era. He, along with his five younger siblings, attended the local parish school, St. Francis Xavier. It may have been providential that his education came under the patronage of one of Catholicism’s most famous missionaries. After

graduation from Creighton Prep in nearby Omaha, Nebraska, McCauley heard the call of the priesthood and joined the formation program for the Congregation of Holy Cross at the University of Notre Dame. After completing his theological training at the Foreign Mission Seminary in Washington, D.C., he was ordained to the priesthood in 1934. The world would become his stage in the accomplishment of his work for God's people.

The Great Depression and its economic ramifications directly impacted the life of the new priest. His desire to join the congregation's mission in East Bengal was placed on hold for two years until sufficient funds became available to sustain him in that distant land. Thus, for two years McCauley lived and worked in southeast Massachusetts, assisting in the formation of seminarians, while attending classes at Boston College. In October 1936, when economic conditions were more satisfactory, McCauley and three other Holy Cross religious sailed to Bengal, arriving in mid-November. Vincent McCauley's missionary experience had begun.

The Holy Cross mission in Bengal was initiated in 1853 and had been continuous since 1888. Still, despite a considerable amount of time in the area, the community's mission was rather primitive, although the zeal for ministry among the people, of whom very few were Christians, was always high. In Bengal, Vincent McCauley learned firsthand about suffering and hardship, from his personal experience and the people he served. His principle work was in religious formation as assistant and later rector of Little Flower, the minor seminary in Bandhura. He also spent close to two years in the northern mission district of Agartala working with the Kukis, a tribal people from the Lushai Hills, who had migrated northwest, and had been served by Canadian Holy Cross religious. Severe illness, however, forced him to return to Bandhura. In late 1943, McCauley was struck by a serious case of phlebitis that

did not respond to treatment. Fearful that some blood clot caused by this condition might lodge in the heart and cause death, McCauley was sent home in May 1944. The trip was made possible through U.S. Army Air Corps personnel whom McCauley had known since his childhood in Iowa. His rather miraculous rescue from harm's way in Bengal indicated God had important plans for his future.

McCauley spent almost a full year in recovery at home and at Notre Dame before being assigned to his alma mater, the Foreign Mission Seminary (the Bengalese) in Washington, D.C. Initially he served as assistant superior and rector, but in the summer of 1946 he was assigned as superior. For six years McCauley continued his work with seminarians, now in a United States context. He was well liked and appreciated by all, including the seminarians at Holy Cross College, the principal theologate for the congregation in the United States, physically located only a five-minute walk from the Bengalese.² After his tenure as rector ended in 1952, McCauley continued on in Washington, serving as procurator of the missions. He spent the vast majority of his time on the road in mission appeals. Yet, he never lost his touch with the seminarians. As one related, "He was always pleasant, even in the early morning after [returning from] a long trip."³

While McCauley was effective as a religious formator and possessed a "Midas touch" in his ability to raise money, his desire and life had always been oriented toward the missions. In April 1958, McCauley and fellow Holy Cross priest, Arnold (Gus) Fell, journeyed to Uganda, East Africa, to evaluate an offer from Bishop Jean Ogez, W.F., and the White Fathers community (today known as the Missionaries of Africa), to assist in the Diocese of Mbarara in the western section of the country.⁴ McCauley and Fell gave a glowing report of their trip, leading directly to the inauguration of a Holy Cross mission in that land. McCauley, together with three newly

ordained priests, Burton Smith, Francis Zagorc, and Robert Hesse, arrived in Entebbe, Uganda, on November 4.

With McCauley's appointment as superior of the mission, the Holy Cross presence expanded in the region over the ensuing years. As more religious came and Holy Cross took responsibility for parishes and schools, Ogez's desire to split the diocese north and south, an idea that had circulated from the outset of the congregation's presence, became stronger. Eventually on April 19, 1961, the Diocese of Fort Portal was canonically erected with Vincent McCauley appointed bishop. While McCauley continually argued his unworthiness and lack of qualifications, he was the natural choice for ordinary, as the region was now largely under the watchful care of Holy Cross religious. After his episcopal ordination at Notre Dame on May 17, McCauley returned to take stock of his new realm. After an initial tour of the diocese he reported to his provincial, Father Theodore Mehling, C.S.C., "Every day the job looks bigger and more complicated."⁵

McCauley served the Church in Uganda as bishop of Fort Portal from 1961 to December 1972. Starting with virtually nothing, McCauley built the institutions, administrative structure, and *esprit de corps* required for this new mission effort. He was responsible for the foundation of numerous parishes, a diocesan structure of operation, including a senate of priests and board of consultors, and the construction of a new cathedral after a massive earthquake in March 1966 destroyed the existing church. Always a strong proponent of the local church, McCauley transformed a local secondary school into St. Mary's Minor Seminary and became a second founder to the Banyatereza Sisters, an indigenous group of religious women from western Uganda. Ever compassionate, he made significant efforts to assist refugees, materially and spiritually, from Rwanda, the Congo, and the Sudan who migrated to western Uganda during various periods of the 1960s. Almost

immediately he became a leader in the Uganda Episcopal Commission (UEC), serving at different times as the chair of the Medical Bureau and Social Communications Department. When Uganda needed a national seminary, the bishops turned to McCauley to lead the development campaign and to oversee construction of Gaba National Seminary, which was dedicated on October 20, 1970. As a visionary bishop in the spirit of Vatican II, McCauley championed the Church's efforts in ecumenism through his organization and leadership in the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC).

Vincent McCauley's talent, boundless energy, and foresight took him beyond the borders of Uganda in a mission to the broader Church of Eastern Africa. In 1964, at the third session of Vatican II, McCauley was elected chairman of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA).⁶ McCauley served this role with great distinction. Working with Father Killian Flynn, O.F.M. Cap., secretary-general of AMECEA, McCauley was responsible for organizing the body's triennial plenary meetings, as well as significant regional conferences on ecumenism. His organizational and financial wizardry was tapped to rescue AMECEA from a severe economic crisis in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and to inaugurate the Gaba Pastoral Institute, a year-long academic program designed to instruct religious leaders in the theology and pedagogy of the post-Vatican II era.

When Killian Flynn died in December 1972, a time that coincided with McCauley's resignation as bishop of Fort Portal, it was natural for him to move to AMECEA headquarters in Nairobi and assume the position of secretary-general. Between 1973 and 1979 McCauley led the AMECEA to new heights through his vision, continued high energy, and ever-faithful commitment to the Church in Eastern Africa. He was responsible for the initiation of a one-year accountancy program at the Nyegezi Social Training Center in Tanzania and numerous

ecumenical efforts, such as a 1974 urban seminar, outreach to the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), and in welcoming the Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust (CORAT) to Eastern Africa. Additionally, as in Fort Portal, McCauley was at the forefront of education, leading the charge for the creation of a secondary-school religious education syllabus for use in all schools in Eastern Africa. The project bore great fruit in its two phases, with its implementation in twenty African countries by 1979. On a more personal level, McCauley never forgot the disenfranchised of society, especially refugees, who flocked to him at the height and during the aftermath of Idi Amin's reign of terror in Uganda.

After fifteen years in a position of leadership with AMECEA, Vincent McCauley stepped down in August 1979 and was replaced by his protégé, Father Joseph Mukwaya. McCauley's life of retirement was anything but quiet, however, as he continued to make significant contributions while in residence at AMECEA headquarters. He served as acting chairman or secretary-general when the sitting officials were not available. Undoubtedly the greatest contribution in this final stage of his life, and one of the most significant in his episcopal career, was his association with the foundation of the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa, today known as the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Serving on academic and financial committees, McCauley continued to apply his skill and zeal for the apostolate to assist the local church through education.

The accomplishments of Vincent McCauley, especially in Eastern Africa, were many and significant, but his story cannot be adequately told without some reference to his association with people and his personal suffering. A victim of facial skin cancer for close to forty years, he never complained about many painful and at times disfiguring surgeries. On the

contrary, he often joked about it. In a salutation to one of his fellow African bishops he wrote: “Do keep well and say a prayer once in a while for the scar-faced Bishop of the Mountains of the Moon.”⁷ McCauley was generous, often to a fault, and always had time for others. He was warm, welcoming, and compassionate. He expressed his care in many ways, by action and word; his sincerity was never questioned by anyone. One Fort Portal priest succinctly stated what many believed: “We felt the Bishop had great love for Jesus and for the people.”⁸

The story of Bishop Vincent McCauley is an important one for several reasons. First, with the Congregation of Holy Cross celebrating fifty years of ministry in East Africa in 2008, it is appropriate to celebrate its best-known and most significant missionary to that region of the world. Secondly, no scholarly research has been done on McCauley or Holy Cross in the region, save a booklet published in 1980 and references in a few books and articles.⁹ While the amount of scholarly research on American mission efforts is increasing, much more needs to be done.

This biography conveniently divides McCauley’s life into its three principal parts. Chapters 1 through 3 describe his time before his 1958 mission to Africa, including his childhood, early years as a priest, missionary experience in Bengal, and twelve years in Washington, D.C., at the Foreign Mission Seminary. Chapters 4 through 9 provide detailed information on McCauley’s life as bishop of Fort Portal. The early days of the congregation’s mission in Uganda are followed by the formation of the diocese and his involvement with many groups, initiatives, and programs. His efforts served both the local church and the Church in Uganda collectively, through his significant participation in the Uganda Episcopal Conference. This section ends with his resignation and move to Nairobi. The last third of this monograph tells McCauley’s story with AMECEA, both as chairman and secretary-general. Bringing

his broad vision to the regional bishops' conference allowed McCauley's talent and goodness to be experienced by more people with many significant positive results, especially the foundation of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. A short epilogue is provided to synthesize McCauley's spirituality and his legacy for the Church and to history.

This biography comes at a very appropriate time for Holy Cross, the Church in Eastern Africa, and Vincent McCauley. In August 2006, the cause for canonization of Bishop Vincent McCauley, C.S.C., was introduced in the Congregation of Saints and has been accepted for review by the Diocese of Fort Portal, Uganda. Thus, McCauley rightly bears the title, "Servant of God." It is neither the purview nor the task of historians to determine the sanctity of individuals. Rather, biographers report and interpret the facts of individual lives to provide a full and clear picture of the time period and the life of the person in question. This historian makes no claims to Bishop McCauley's merit as a saint, but unquestionably he was a valiant man of God who brought his faith, talent, energy, and joyful personality to people on three continents. This fact alone makes his life meritorious and a model for others to follow.

CHAPTER 1

The Early Years: 1906–1936



Since the time of Jesus Christ, the missionary spirit has been active among the Christian faithful. Jesus' exhortation to his disciples was crystal clear: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Mt 28: 18b–20a). Church historian Stephen Neill gives three prominent reasons for the initial Christian evangelization process. First, since Jesus did not return as soon as anticipated there was a need to spread his teaching to the then-known world. Secondly, unlike Judaism, which saw the movement of faith from the periphery to Jerusalem, Christians saw the need to move from the center to the periphery. Lastly, the destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent Diaspora of 70 CE sent disciples of the "New Way" to all regions to preach (Acts 8:4).¹

This missionary spirit was first and foremost exemplified in the life of Saul of Tarsus. Converted on the road to Damascus, Saul, who took the Christian name Paul, became the great evangelist to the Gentiles. On three long and arduous journeys, Paul, buoyed by the decision at the Council of Jerusalem in 49 CE,² brought the message and mission of Jesus to the then-known European world. Not only did Paul start several Christian communities of faith, but additionally he left to posterity his corpus of writings which even today serves to articulate the basic teachings of Christian theology.

Paul's initial efforts to bring the message of Christ to the world have been repeated and advanced throughout the two thousand years of Christian history. While the faith spread rapidly within the Roman world, it took several centuries before Christianity reached beyond the Mediterranean region. It was the dawn of the era of exploration that re-energized Jesus' initial challenge to "make disciples of all nations." The desire to bring products and goods from the regions of Asia to Europe, and the spirit of adventure associated with new discoveries, prompted explorers to venture both east and west. Traveling east, the Portuguese brought their Catholic faith with them when they reached the Indian subcontinent. The efforts of the famous Jesuits Francis Xavier, Mateo Ricci, and Robert de Nobili to evangelize peoples in India, China, Japan, and neighboring lands are both legendary and heroic. Using an inculturation method that was certainly forward thinking for the time, these courageous followers of Christ established the roots of Christianity in lands that for many centuries had been the stronghold of Eastern religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Seen in the context of their day and the adverse and hostile conditions they found, their endeavors can only be described as highly successful. In the West, led by the Spanish, the New World was evangelized principally through the efforts of religious orders, especially

the Franciscans and Jesuits. Using a more forceful approach of acculturation, the Spanish missionaries rapidly converted the whole of Central and South America. In North America, the French, utilizing inculturation, came to the regions of what is today New England, eastern Canada, and the upper Midwest to work with various Native American tribes. Numerically their success was small, but their spirit, as exemplified by the heroic martyrdom of Saints Isaac Jogues and John de Brebeuf, continued the centuries-old tradition of making disciples of all nations.³

The missionary spirit that was so endemic to the Christian culture of Europe continued in the United States after the Church's establishment with the erection of the See of Baltimore in 1789 and the appointment of its first bishop, John Carroll. In 1830, John England, the first bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, spoke with Pope Gregory XVI about fostering the sacramental life among African Catholics who had settled in Liberia, a nation founded by freed American slaves. England brought the concept of pastoral care of these people to the First and Second Provincial Councils of Baltimore in 1829 and 1833, respectively. The Jesuits were asked to take the Liberian mission, but they refused, citing too many ongoing responsibilities in western North America. In 1841, however, Propaganda Fide (today the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) issued an appeal to the United States bishops for assistance to areas outside of the United States. Thus, a three-man team, Edward Barron, vicar general of the Diocese of Philadelphia, John Kelly from Albany, New York, and Denis Pindor, a lay catechist from Baltimore, journeyed to Liberia. The mission continued until 1884 under the leadership of the Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which soon amalgamated with the Holy Ghost Fathers.⁴

In the mid-nineteenth century, United States missionary efforts expanded further. In 1860, Propaganda Fide requested

that the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, oversee the spiritual needs of the few Catholics in the Bahamas. Unable to mount any sustained effort, Charleston passed the project to the Archdiocese of New York. St. Francis Xavier Church in Nassau was constructed in 1885. A few years later, the Sisters of Charity and Benedictines from Newark, New Jersey, got involved in the mission. By 1896, the former had started two schools in Nassau. The Benedictine mission also continued, slowly but gradually, growing with support from its parent community in Minnesota. Through the Benedictines and the Sisters of Charity, the New York archdiocese maintained its missionary activity in the Bahamas until 1931.

Religious congregations were also independently active in mission work. Pope Pius IX asked the Redemptorists to assist in the Caribbean mission on St. Thomas and St. Croix. Religious arrived there in 1858. The Passionists established a foundation in Mexico City in 1865. Later they moved south into Argentina and Chile. Franciscan sisters from Albany, New York, went to Jamaica in 1879. Additional Franciscan sisters from Syracuse, New York, under the direction of Blessed Marianne Cope (1838–1918), went to Hawaii. In November 1883, Cope, along with six other sisters, arrived in Honolulu to work in hospitals specializing in leprosy. By April 1884, the sisters were in charge of Kakaako Hospital on Molakai, as they had requested before coming to the region. In 1893, the superior general of the Jesuits asked the Missouri Province to take a mission in British Honduras (today Belize). In 1898, the Jesuits invited Sisters of the Holy Family (founded in New Orleans in 1842) to assist them in mission schools. In addition to institutional commitments, several individual religious went to the missions abroad, including to China and New Zealand.⁵

The Congregation of Holy Cross, a religious order of priests and brothers established in 1837 in LeMans, France, took up the missionary challenge of Jesus almost from

its foundation. The congregation's founder, Blessed Basil Anthony Mary Moreau, a secular priest of LeMans, envisioned a congregation of clerics and lay brothers who would assist the local bishop as necessary to rebuild the Church in the wake of the destruction wrought by the French Revolution and its aftermath.⁶ On March 1, 1837, the congregation was formed when a fundamental pact was signed uniting the Brothers of St. Joseph, founded in France by Father Jacques Dujarie in 1820, and the Auxiliary Priests (band of diocesan clergy) from the Sainte-Croix district of the city of LeMans, headed by Father Moreau. By 1839, the new religious community had 34 houses in France and 127 members—12 priests, 115 brothers (24 professed, 78 novices, and 13 postulants).⁷

Moreau, the leader of the congregation, placed the community under the guidance of the local bishop for service to the Church. In 1840, Moreau accepted the invitation of the bishop of Algiers to initiate a mission in northern Africa, then a “department” of France. While the project was short-lived and unsuccessful, Moreau's effort led later to other more successful initiatives. In 1841, Father Edward Sorin, C.S.C., one of Moreau's most promising men, traveled with six brothers to the wilderness of northern Indiana and the Diocese of Vincennes. In November 1842, Sorin founded the University of Notre Dame, which today stands as the principal institution of the congregation in the United States. In 1853, Holy Cross went to East Bengal, as part of an agreement made with the Holy See to secure the Congregation's canonical erection.⁸

The dawn of the twentieth century, most especially the destruction wrought by World War I, caused great upheaval for world missions. The retrenchment of European Catholics, due to the destruction of so many institutions and loss of personnel, gave Americans a golden opportunity to serve. It was the hour for the United States' mission to shine through four significant manifestations: (1) creation of student organizations

for mission education and promotion, (2) nationalization and coordination of mission agencies through the hierarchy, (3) outreach to Catholics in Latin America, and (4) convergence on China of United States Catholic missionaries. In July 1918, the Catholic Students Mission Crusade (CSMC) was launched, headquartered in Cincinnati with Thomas Shahan, rector of the Catholic University of America, as leader. The CSMC was highly influential in energizing people for mission work and providing an alternative to the capitalist and bureaucratic aspects of America. The mission division of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), established at Notre Dame in July 1919, was responsible for the formation of the American Board of Catholic Missions (ABCM). The ABCM was approved in 1922 but did not have a constitution or begin its official work until January 1, 1926. From its foundation until the mid-1930s, the NCWC was involved with church and state affairs in Mexico. As described by historian Douglas Slawson, the NCWC and its Latin American Bureau branch of the Social Action Department were able to assist in returning stability and peace to the Mexican people.⁹

In June 1925, the Catholic Hospital Association and the Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB) was formed. Its purpose was to ascertain the needs of missionaries and to collect and distribute medical supplies and medicine to them. By 1934, the organization had distributed 23,000 surgical instruments to almost 900 mission stations and 295 religious congregations worldwide.¹⁰

At this same time the Society for the Propagation of the Faith began to promote the idea that women missionaries needed to work with women, especially concerning health-care issues. The most significant spokesperson for medical missions was Dr. Anna Dengel (1892–1980). Observing this need, and believing that white people owed a debt “to peoples subjugated and exploited by their forefathers,” she

formed a religious congregation devoted to medical missions. In September 1925, with the help of Father Michael Mathis, C.S.C., who helped her write the congregation's constitution, Dengel started the "Pious Society" of Catholic Medical Missionaries, "whose purpose was to provide professional medical help where it was most needed." In 1936 the society became a religious congregation.¹¹

This same spirit of adventure and desire to bring the gospel message to all peoples was present in the mind of Vincent McCauley, who understood well and lived fully his Christian call to evangelize the world to Christ. In a career that would span almost five decades, McCauley, as priest and bishop, brought Jesus' message to peoples in Bengal and Eastern Africa. A man of great vision and unbounded energy, despite a lifetime bout with cancer, Vincent McCauley represented the mid-twentieth century missionary in his finest hour. Never cowed by difficult conditions, discouraging results, or lack of support, McCauley courageously and successfully planted and nurtured the faith in far-off lands for over thirty years.

Early Life and Religious Formation

Vincent Joseph McCauley, the eldest of six children of Charles McCauley and Mary Wickham, was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on March 8, 1906. He was baptized ten days later, on March 18, at the family parish, St. Francis Xavier, certainly an appropriate church for the future missionary priest and bishop. Vincent received the sacrament of confirmation at this same parish on May 6, 1917.¹²

McCauley's home life in Council Bluffs centered itself about family and activities associated with the Church. His father, Charles, described as a "perfectly integrated man with whom you felt comfortable,"¹³ was a wire chief for American Telephone and Telegraph (ATT) in Omaha. His mother tended

the home front, meeting the needs of Vincent's five younger siblings, Mary Margaret, Robert, Paul, Eleanor, and Eileen. As was common for many Catholic families of the era, especially those of Irish heritage, the McCauley clan recited the daily family rosary, a practice that undoubtedly was highly influential to Vincent for his future spirituality, which emphasized strong Marian devotion and recitation of the rosary. Charles McCauley was an active member of the Knights of Columbus at St. Francis Xavier parish while his wife, Mary, was an active participant in the altar guild and various parish prayer circles. Years later, these prayer groups would become the locus for financial assistance for Vincent during his missionary efforts, especially during the troubled period of the Great Depression and World War II.¹⁴ The family regularly attended missions and many other parish-sponsored events. As with many Catholic families of the period, the parish was central to the McCauley family's religious and social life.

As the eldest child of six, Vincent took very seriously his responsibilities toward his younger siblings. He was the surrogate parent on the rare occasions when their parents were both out of the house. He commanded his siblings' respect, for he was never domineering, but rather demonstrated a gentle, yet at the same time forceful, way with his brothers and sisters. He had a special touch, another characteristic that would be invaluable and widely demonstrated later in his priestly life, that drew others to him. McCauley was especially helpful to his siblings, as well as his parents, when tragedy struck the family. In 1930, his brother Paul, who had finished high school and was ready to enter the Jesuits, was killed in a car accident. Years later, he was the source of strength for his sister Eileen, when her husband of only six months died tragically of measles at a U.S. Army camp.¹⁵ McCauley was always extremely grateful for his family, especially the support they gave him in his life. In 1948 he wrote,

I would be less than grateful if I did not remember all you have done, all you have been, and if I did not try in some way to make a return. You realize, I am sure, that as a Religious I have nothing that I can call my own and am not, therefore, free to express gratitude in a material way. But things spiritual are to me very real. . . . My Mass is to me my greatest treasure and I daily ask God to share its fruits with all of you.¹⁶

In typical fashion for the day, McCauley was a product of the Catholic education system. He and all his siblings attended the parish school, St. Francis Xavier. He then matriculated to Creighton Prep in Omaha where he excelled in sports, especially baseball, which was his true love.¹⁷ He played first base and was known as a good “long ball hitter.” He was adept enough to play a summer of semi-pro baseball in Omaha in order to make a little extra money.¹⁸ After finishing the program at Creighton Prep, it was a natural move to Creighton University’s College of Arts and Letters where he matriculated as a member of the class of 1928.¹⁹

His time at Creighton was cut short rather unexpectedly, however, when members of the Congregation of Holy Cross gave a mission at St. Francis Xavier parish in the early fall of 1924. Like many American Catholic young men McCauley, during his youth, was enamored by the mystique of Notre Dame. As a sports fan, he and his brothers listened almost religiously to Notre Dame football games on the radio. McCauley was very impressed by the mission and more especially the messengers. He spoke with one of the priests, Father Joseph Boyle, C.S.C., about Notre Dame and the Holy Cross community. The encounter sparked in him the desire for the priesthood, a latent feeling that was, according to family members, rarely expressed.²⁰ In a letter to Holy Cross officials at Notre Dame, however, McCauley claimed “that this calling [priesthood] has been the aim of my life for many years.” In

a letter to the vocation director, he spoke of his desire to join Holy Cross: "Trusting that God wills it, my only desire now is for a favorable reply from you."²¹

McCauley left Council Bluffs in November 1924 to join the Congregation of Holy Cross. McCauley spent the next five years of his initial formation at Notre Dame. Because his entry was mid-year, he was sent initially to the minor seminary at Holy Cross Hall at the University. On July 1, 1925, he entered the novitiate on campus and professed his first vows on July 2, 1926. He spent three years in temporary vows as he completed his undergraduate education. He professed perpetual vows on July 2, 1929, and graduated from Notre Dame in June of the next year.²²

As a finally professed religious, McCauley continued his training at the Foreign Mission Seminary (FMS, commonly called the Bengalese) at Washington, D.C. The FMS was the brainchild of Father Michael Mathis, C.S.C., who, although not a veteran of the Congregation's mission in Bengal, held an untiring interest and love for this apostolate. In 1917 he founded the Holy Cross Foreign Mission Society and in 1919 started *The Bengalese*, a monthly magazine that chronicled the stories of missionaries and their work as a means to raise money for the mission. On September 23, 1924, the Foreign Mission Seminary was opened as a residence for seminarian mission candidates with Mathis appointed as the first rector and procurator of the missions. This establishment was a significant achievement for Holy Cross and especially the Bengal mission. As Edmund Goedert, C.S.C., has commented about the foundation, "From this point on, a steady flow of men began coming to Dacca and the greatest problem of the missions [adequate personnel] was solved." When McCauley arrived in Washington in September 1930 to begin theological study, Mathis was still superior, although George Marr, C.S.C., took over in the fall of 1931.²³

McCauley and everyone at the FMS attended classes at Holy Cross College, the principal theologate for the congregation in Washington, and a mere five-minute walk down Taylor Street to Harewood Road. Holy Cross College, founded in 1895, was one of the first religious establishments in response to the call by the American bishops to centralize religious houses of formation around the new Catholic University of America, which opened in 1889.²⁴ During these years he received all the minor orders, including the order of deacon on October 1, 1933. He was ordained with his classmates, John Lane and Joseph Corcoran, on June 24, 1934, by Bishop John Noll of Fort Wayne at Sacred Heart Church at Notre Dame. He immediately returned to Council Bluffs for a brief vacation. There he conducted mission appeals in local parishes before moving to his new assignment. At the conclusion of this work, stating he was ready for any assignment given to him, McCauley demonstrated his lighthearted side, comically writing to the provincial, James Burns: “I have not been excommunicated, jailed or ostracized in this land of burnt-up cornfields.”²⁵

McCauley’s desire to train for the missions at the Bengalese requires some analysis. Interviews with members of his family reveal little as to his motivation for this specialized ministry. However, years later in a lecture at Creighton University, McCauley revealed at least partially his motivation for this narrow and more difficult road (Mt 7:13–14):

For more than thirty-five years I have had the conviction that it was the Faith and zeal and generosity of the Christian Community in Council Bluffs and Omaha that produced the situation, conditions, [and] atmosphere that enabled me and many others to receive the privilege of serving in the missions.²⁶

Thus, it appears that McCauley chose to be a missionary from the example of sharing and self-sacrifice he experienced from family and friends at home. As the story of Vincent McCauley's life unfolds, it will be clear that this same spirit of personal sacrifice and self-giving was part and parcel of his ministry as priest and bishop for almost fifty years.

Besides his desire for mission work, the basic spirituality that McCauley possessed and practiced needs explanation to assess its origins. Vincent McCauley was a simple man, who found this virtue from his Midwest roots. Fellow Holy Cross religious speak of how "he never really cared for material things." He was a man of hope who refused to give up on any endeavor or individual.²⁷ While McCauley, unlike his contemporary and fellow Holy Cross religious Father Patrick Peyton, never wore his spirituality on his sleeve, all knew he was a man of great prayer and personal holiness.²⁸ The one area that was more obvious was his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Many contemporaries speak of rosary recitation as essential at the outset of any trip McCauley took by car. He made regular visits to the shrine at Lourdes, seeking strength for his work in the missions. He was convinced that if he was willing to serve, Mary's intercession with Christ would provide the strength necessary. McCauley's devotion to the Blessed Mother was demonstrated in a homily delivered on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception:

When God so honours His mother, can we do less? When God makes His mother sinless can we fail to rejoice? When God shows His life and His Divine work with His Mother, can we His redeemed children neglect her? We fulfill God's plan when we honour Mary and we make our own lives pleasing to God when we let Mary be in all things Our Mother.²⁹

McCauley's time at the Bengalese had prepared him for assignment to the Bengal missions, but the economic short-fall resulting from the Great Depression forced Holy Cross to restrict the number of men assigned to the mission, due to costs for travel as well as maintenance in the mission field. Bishop Timothy Crowley, C.S.C., of Dacca (Bengal) had informed the provincial, James Burns, of the situation in mid-1934. Thus, Burns, with the approval of the superior general, assigned McCauley "as a member of the faculty at our seminary at North Dartmouth, Mass[achusetts]."³⁰

While Holy Cross had established educational and parochial foundations in the Midwest, South, and West, the East did not attract the congregation until the period of the Great Depression.³¹ James Wesley Donahue, superior general of the congregation from 1926 to 1938, had been favorably impressed with the area from his initial visit there in 1912 as a member of the community's mission band.³² In November 1931, James Cassidy, apostolic administrator and auxiliary bishop of Fall River, Massachusetts, wrote to Donahue inviting him to start a seminary in the diocese. Favorably disposed to Cassidy's offer, Donahue proposed to the 1932 General Chapter of Holy Cross that the community purchase property in southeast Massachusetts in order to open a minor seminary. The proposal was approved and, after some negotiations with the diocese and local officials, the former Crary Hospital and its sixty-eight acres of property were purchased at North Dartmouth. On December 8, 1933, the superior general celebrated the first Mass at Our Lady of Holy Cross.³³

McCauley taught at North Dartmouth while simultaneously taking classes in English and speech at Boston College. One of his collateral duties at the seminary was director of maintenance. This kept him busy, as the repairs to the old building were numerous and thus very time consuming. Although not

enrolled in a degree program, McCauley honed his academic skills while commuting to Jesuit-sponsored Boston College.

Meanwhile, Holy Cross's presence in the East continued to expand. On March 2, 1935, Thomas Duffy, C.S.C., arrived at Our Lady of Holy Cross to assume duties as superior of the eastern mission band. During the visit he and seminary superior William Doheny traveled to North Easton, about forty miles north, to tour the Frederick Ames estate, which was being offered for sale.³⁴ The facility was perceived by Duffy as the ideal location and environment for the realization of his dream of a college foundation.³⁵ In August 1935, after negotiations on price were completed, Holy Cross purchased the Ames estate, consisting of approximately 350 acres of land and several buildings. The community chronicle reported that the sale "assures the Congregation of an enviable and an ideal location for the expansion of its Eastern apostolate."³⁶

Transfer of the seminary from North Dartmouth to North Easton was accomplished after the sale was finalized. As director of maintenance, McCauley directed the physical move of five carloads of furniture and other household and personal items to North Easton.³⁷ He was very impressed with the North Easton property, calling it "one of the niftiest layouts in all New England, barring none." He did realize, however, that the expansive area and assorted buildings would necessitate much maintenance. As he put it to his family, "Our biggest problem now is taking care of this place."³⁸ While there, McCauley continued both his duties as teacher and student.

After two years in the East, Vincent McCauley was ready and eager to begin new adventures in his life and priestly ministry. He spent the summer in New York City at Blessed Sacrament Parish on West 71st Street awaiting his new assignment. He spoke of his time as "a pleasant and profitable change from North Easton, much as I enjoyed the past year there."³⁹

Summary

The vast Midwestern plains of western Iowa played host to the early years of Vincent McCauley. Raised in a typical blue-collar family, McCauley found his initial call to follow Jesus' exhortation to evangelize all peoples through his Catholic education and the missionary efforts of the Congregation of Holy Cross. After his initial training at Notre Dame, McCauley was sent for formal preparation for his mission dream at the "Bengalese" in Washington, D.C. Under the influence of one of Holy Cross's twentieth century mission heroes, Michael Mathis, C.S.C., McCauley readied himself for the mission field. After ordination, however, due to insufficient funds to maintain him in Bengal, he was asked to wait two years and was, thus, assigned to Holy Cross foundations in Massachusetts. After two years, however, with the economic hardships of the Great Depression lessening on the American people, Vincent McCauley was ready to begin his first great adventure as a missionary in Bengal. It was only the beginning of a life dedicated to bringing Christ's gospel message to the world.