



# Pillars

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Our Philanthropic  
Mission: Uniting  
those who are  
called to be  
witnesses of  
Christ's love,  
and stewards  
of His gifts, with  
our mission to  
proclaim the  
Kingdom of  
God to all.



# On the Path to Sainthood

by Rev. David T. Tyson, C.S.C.

We celebrate a saint! Saint André, pray for us!

My friends in Holy Cross, I am delighted to share with you this very special issue of *Pillars* honoring the life of Saint André Bessette, canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 17<sup>th</sup>, along with five other men of the Congregation of Holy Cross who are at various stages on the path to sainthood. Some of their names may be familiar to you while others you may be learning about for the first time. Each of these holy men is a unique story which we honor in the following pages.

Saint André Bessette, a man whose simple and profound faith earned him the title, *Miracle Man of Montreal*, is first among our stories. One need only consider the fact that an estimated one million people paid their respects after his death to sense the gravity of his life and ministry. Other men of Holy Cross featured in this issue are Blessed Rev. Basil Moreau, Servant of God Archbishop Theotoni Ganguly, Servant of God Rev. Patrick Peyton, and Servant of God Bishop Vincent McCauley. Each lived and worked in distinct times and cultures, sharing their unique gifts in service to God's people. What transcends the differences of each man is the shared trust in Divine Providence, enabling them to carry on through illness, persecution, and seemingly insurmountable challenges. The Spirit with which these men lived and loved did not end in their death, but continues to inspire us and give us much needed hope.

It may be helpful if I briefly review the stages of canonization and some of the terms and titles ascribed to candidates for sainthood that you will come across in the wonderful articles written by and about Holy Cross religious:

In the first stage of canonization, a group such as a religious congregation, parish or diocese makes a request to the bishop to open an investigation to determine if the candidate should be considered for sainthood. This may also be referred to as "introducing the cause." The Vatican grants what is referred to as a "nihil obstat" (L. nothing hinders). At this point, a thorough examination begins, which involves the testimony of witnesses before a tribunal and reviewing the candidate's writings and a study of his or her life. *Servant of God* is the title bestowed on the individual during the investigation process.

The findings are presented to the Congregation of Saints in Rome, and the title of *Venerable* is given following a favorable judgment and Papal approval. This is the second stage.



*Beatification* refers to the next stage of canonization at which the Pope deems the person to be worthy of belief. A substantiated miracle must be attributed to the person or the person must have been martyred in order to be beatified and receive the title of *Blessed*.

The canonization process is finally completed when a second miracle is substantiated and the person is formally recognized to be in heaven. The Pope then declares the *Blessed* to be a *Saint*. The saint's feast day is the day of death, or when the saint entered heaven.

Is the title "saint" reserved for the most holy of men and women? Can our lives embody the attributes, devotion and love that we recognize in our saints? Seeking saintliness for the sake of the title will lead us astray, but the sincere desire to live faithfully in following Christ will surely bring us closer in communion with those saintly men and women gone before us.

As I reflect on the lives of these men, I am compelled to emulate their spirit of gratitude, humility and faithfulness. These are the lives we all have set before us as examples of what it means to live as Christ calls us. While most of us are not called to be missionaries or establish a religious congregation, we are all called to be saints and we all have opportunities in our lives to live as simply and faithfully as Saint André Bessette. Let us ask God to reveal those ways to us as we strive to be living saints today.



# The Miracle Man of Montreal

by Rev. Stephen Lacroix, C.S.C.

On October 17, 2010, Brother André Bessette was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI, thus becoming the Congregation of Holy Cross's first saint. In doing so, the Church is recognizing the holiness of his life and the value of his intercession, acknowledging that God has lifted this man up in a special way to lead others closer to Christ. This recognition is a joyous day



André Bessette as a novice, 1870.

for Holy Cross and for the Church as a whole, but in many ways it is an unlikely culmination of a life that began under such humble circumstances.

The man known throughout the world simply as "Brother André" was born in Quebec on August 9, 1845 to Isaac and Clothilde Bessette. His parents named him Alfred, and he was one of 12 children, two of whom died in childbirth. Alfred's health was extremely fragile, and his parents had him baptized immediately for fear that he might die.

Alfred indeed survived, and he was raised in a very humble setting. His father was a carpenter and a wheelwright, and the family moved often so that he could find work. Alfred was a young child when his father died in a lumberjacking accident. Alfred's mother was unable to keep the family together, and his brothers and

sisters were sent to live with relatives. Alfred stayed with his mother. He would later recall that she doted on him more than on the others, perhaps paying special attention to him because of his frail health. His mother died when he was 12, and Alfred was sent to live with relatives. He would soon have to look for work in order to support himself. He had little formal education, but from an early age he had a deep and lively faith. Even at a young age he began to develop a special devotion to St. Joseph, noting that St. Joseph was a carpenter like Alfred's own father.

Like many young Quebecois of his day, Alfred eventually traveled to the United States in search of better job opportunities. His years in the United States were hard.

He alternately sought work on farms, in mills or in trades, but he struggled. His delicate constitution made it particularly difficult to sustain the physical demands required by these kinds of work.

After a few years, he returned to Canada, where he reconnected with Fr. André Provençal. Fr. Provençal recognized Alfred's great piety and encouraged him to consider a vocation to religious life. It was Fr. Provençal who introduced Alfred to the brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross. He sent Alfred to Holy Cross with a note informing them, "I am sending you a saint."

Alfred entered the Holy Cross Novitiate on December 27, 1870, and he took the name André. At last he seemed to have

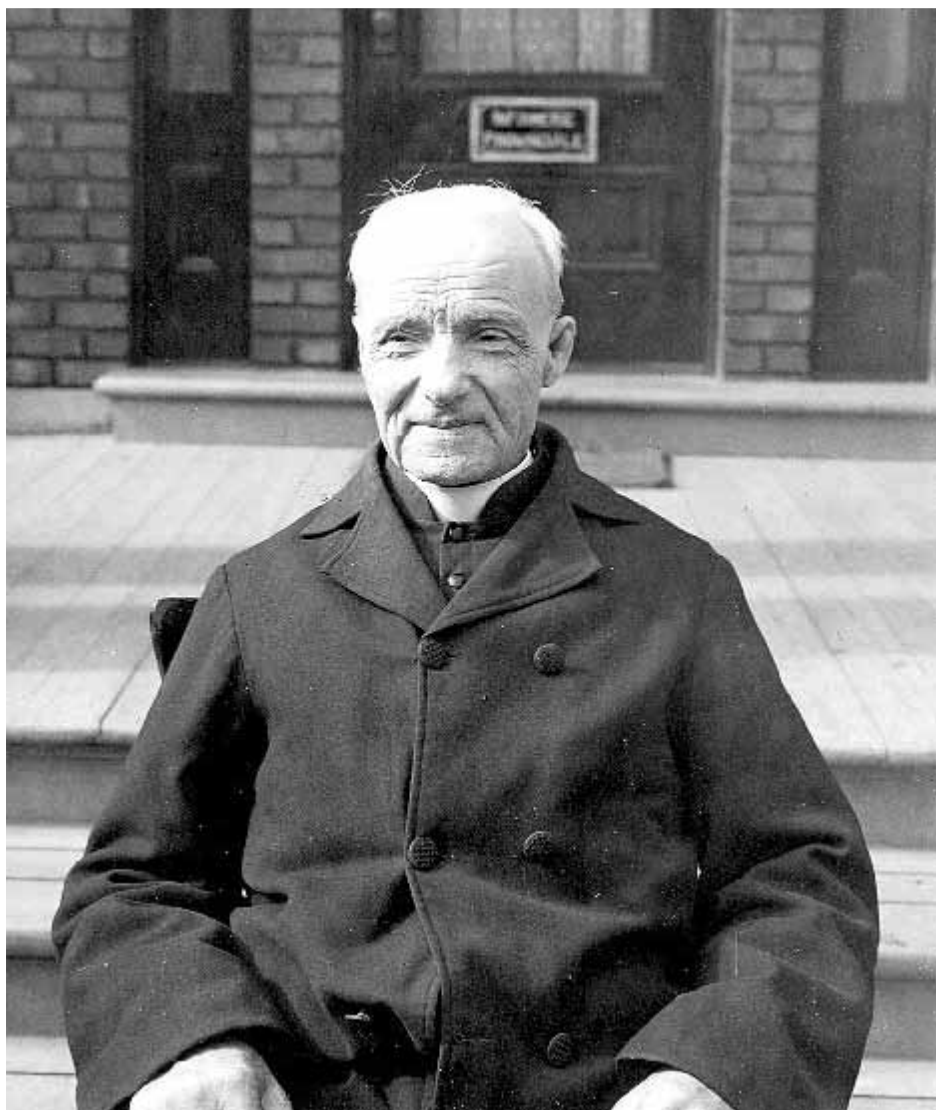


A young Brother André after profession of final vows.

found his true calling, and yet as he anticipated professing vows in Holy Cross, his future in the Congregation was anything but certain. His religious superiors told him that he would not be allowed to profess vows, largely because his poor health would prevent him from doing the kinds of work expected of a Holy Cross brother. He was devastated and eventually pleaded his case to the local bishop. His novice master also advocated for him, saying, "If this young man is one day unable to work, he will at least know very well how to pray." The Congregation eventually relented and allowed him to take temporary vows. He later professed his perpetual vows on February 2, 1874.

Brother André's novitiate assignment was as doorkeeper of Notre Dame College in Montreal, and he continued this assignment as a professed brother. He would later joke that Holy Cross "showed me the door, and I stayed there for 40 years." As doorkeeper, he was responsible for greeting visitors and addressing their needs, in addition to several other duties. People found him easy to talk to, and he was always ready to share his great devotion to St. Joseph with others, praying with them and exhorting them to pray for the intercession of Jesus' foster father. Many people shared their problems with him, and he was always ready to pray with them. When people complained to him about illnesses and other physical maladies, he encouraged them to pray to St. Joseph. Eventually, many people began to notice that they experienced physical healings after praying with Brother André.

His reputation began to spread. Increasing numbers of people came to Notre Dame College looking for him, and many parents were concerned about the sick people roaming the halls of the school looking for Brother André. So the Congregation allowed him to see sick people at a trolley station across the street.



Brother André, near the age of 70.

The crowds got larger, more cures were reported, and Brother André became increasingly well-known. Through it all Brother André remained humble, often seeming confused that people would lavish such praise on him. He knew that the real source of these miraculous cures was the intercession of St. Joseph himself. Brother André was merely a tool of providence, calling himself "St. Joseph's little dog." He always deflected the attention away from himself and towards St. Joseph.

His desire to increase devotion to St. Joseph inspired him to create a shrine to

his favorite saint. He envisioned a shrine dedicated to St. Joseph on the property owned by Holy Cross across the street from Notre Dame College. Brother André got his chance to make this dream a reality on one occasion when he was confined to the infirmary. His superior was ill in the next bed, and Brother André used that opportunity to obtain permission to build a small shrine. His superior allowed him to do it if he could raise the money to make it happen. Brother André was allowed to save the money he earned from giving haircuts at five cents apiece, and



he eventually earned the \$200 he needed to construct a simple shrine.

This shrine opened on October 19, 1904 and soon attracted many pilgrims. In 1909, Brother André was released from his duties as doorkeeper and assigned full-time as the caretaker of the shrine. He received visitors all day long, throngs of sick people seeking a cure from this modest healer. The crowds quickly outgrew the simple structure. It was soon expanded, and plans were soon made for a grand basilica on this site. Brother André's full-time ministry was to receive the long lines of sick and afflicted visitors, offering them comfort, hope and often physical healing.

Not everyone was pleased with Brother André's increasing fame. Many people considered him a charlatan. Brother André often recommended that people use a medal of St. Joseph or oil burned in a lamp under a statue of St. Joseph, and some viewed these "cures" as superstitious. Brother André, however, knew better. He never placed his faith in the medals or the oil, but he knew that these visible signs helped people to pray more fervently.



The wall of crutches at Saint Joseph's Oratory.

Brother André's ministry as caretaker of St. Joseph's Oratory was grueling. In addition to his normal schedule of Mass and prayer, he spent long hours each morning and afternoon receiving the long lines of people waiting to see him. Then he spent the evenings traveling to the homes and hospital beds of the sick who were unable to make the trip to the Oratory. Many times his prayers resulted in a cure. Often they did not. However, over the course of several decades, thousands of healings were attributed to his intercession. He became increasingly well-known. Even on his regular visits to the United States, he was besieged by crowds looking for the "Miracle Man of Montreal". He always obliged, although he always deflected the attention away from himself and towards St. Joseph.

The growth of Brother André's reputation paralleled the growth of the Oratory of St. Joseph. Construction of the crypt church was completed in the summer of 1917, after which construction began on the basilica. Finances were a continual challenge that often threatened to halt progress on the ambitious project, but Brother André always maintained his faith in God's providence. He firmly believed that the Oratory was God's will and that God would see it through to completion. During one work stoppage in which there were no funds to build the roof, Brother André placed a statue of St. Joseph in the middle of the church. He said, "If he wants a roof over his head, he'll take care of it." The funds were soon raised.

Brother André did not live to see this great structure completed. He died on January 6, 1937 at the age of 91. His illness and eventual death were front-page news, and great crowds came to honor this holy man who had helped so many. During the week that his body lay in state outside of St. Joseph's Oratory, it is estimated that one million people braved the bitter Montreal winter to pay their

respects. The basilica was eventually completed, a majestic addition to the Montreal skyline. It remains a major pilgrimage site, attracting over two million visitors a year. The side chapels are filled with the crutches of people healed by Brother André's prayers.

Brother André was beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 23, 1982. In his homily, the pope called him "a man of prayer, a friend of the poor, a truly astonishing man."

**Prayer for the canonization  
of Blessed Brother André  
Bessette, C.S.C.**



*Lord our God, friend of the lowly,  
you gave your servant, Saint André  
Bessette, a great devotion to St.  
Joseph and a special commitment  
to the poor and afflicted. Through  
his intercession help us to follow  
his example of prayer and love and  
so come to share with him in your  
glory. We ask this in the name of  
Jesus the Lord. Amen.*

He declared that Brother André's witness was just as compelling now as it was during his earthly life. "Is not his faith in the power of prayer one of the most precious signs for men and women of our time, who are tempted to resolve their problems without recourse to God?"

Indeed, Brother André remains an inspiration and a model for the entire Church. For those of us in the Congregation of Holy Cross, he embodies many of the values that are central to our religious life. Our congregational motto, *Ave crux, spes unica*, affirms our belief that the cross of Christ is our only hope. Brother André lived this hope every day. The crowds of people who came to see him each day were usually poor, sick and desperate. They came to him hoping for, and sometimes even demanding, nothing short of a miracle. In these people, Brother André

*"Put yourself in God's hands; he abandons no one."*

## St. André



Brother André in front of Saint Joseph Chapel, 1921.

came face to face with the cross of Christ each and every day. Sometimes the demands of this ministry took their toll on him, especially given his own fragile health, and yet he never shied away from this difficult but important vocation for which God had singled him out.

Brother André received the most attention for miraculous healings, but his ministry was much more than this. It is impossible to know for sure how many

people were healed through his intercession, but the number of reported cures is only a small percentage of the numbers who came to visit him. Simply put, many people sought a cure and did not receive one. However, everyone encountered the love and mercy of Christ in the face of this simple and holy brother. He helped people find hope even in the midst of their suffering, and he helped people to grow in prayer, spreading devotion to St. Joseph and to the Passion of Christ. He allowed himself to be used as a tool of providence, leaving the fruits of his work up to God.

Brother André's formal recognition by the Catholic Church reminds us of our call to follow his example. We are all called to empty ourselves so that we too may be used as instruments of God's mercy. We too are called to help people find hope even in the midst of their sufferings. We too

are called to bear our own crosses, to endure our own infirmities and limitations, and to see the face of Christ in the poorest and lowliest of His children. Brother André's legacy is a heroic one, a profound reminder that God raises up those who are lowly in the eyes of the world and uses the weak to manifest his strength. As we seek to imitate his holiness and humility, we say with great confidence, "St. André, pray for us." ■

On January 6, 1937, the death of a humble doorman for a boys' college drew over a million people to Montreal. For 40 years, Brother André Bessette of the Congregation of Holy Cross welcomed people at the door and became known as a miraculous healer. A documentary produced by Salt+Light Television entitled, ***God's doorman: St. André of Montreal***, looks at the heart and legacy of Brother André — as a man of prayer, of hospitality, and of compassion; a man who draws people in to experience a God who is love.

On October 17, 2010, Brother André was given the title Saint André, the first male Canadian-born saint and the first saint for the Congregation of Holy Cross. He is living proof that "it is with the smallest brushes that the artist paints the most beautiful pictures."



The documentary features interviews from Montreal, Rome, and different parts of the United States with people who knew him and others who continue Saint André's work today.

You can find sample footage of the documentary on their website devoted to Saint André and his canonization at: <http://www.saltandlighttv.org/brotherandre/>. While at the site you can order your own copy of the documentary.

The web site also offers a number of resources on the life and times of Saint André, a collection of images of Saint André throughout his years, and spiritual resources to help connect more deeply to this humble saint.

# Blessed Basil Moreau

by Rev. Kevin Grove, C.S.C.

I came to Holy Cross really knowing very little about Fr. Basil Moreau. I already had particular saints who were patrons and models for me of discipleship in Christ. So when I first discovered Fr. Moreau as a Holy Cross candidate and especially a novice, I indeed underestimated the impact his life and spirituality would have on my own. But as I progressed through seminary formation in Holy Cross, I grew closer to a holy mentor who forsook personal gain and prestige in life because he was so taken with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ meant everything to him and thus he was able to leave everything behind in order to teach it. At the most profound spiritual depth, Fr. Moreau allowed the paschal mystery to permeate his life, actions, and leadership such that he could found an entire congregation on the premise that the cross of Christ is not one hope among others, but the only one. *Ave Crux Spes Unica*, the Latin paraphrase of a medieval hymn, became the motto for Fr. Moreau's entire congregation: Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope. By the time I had completed my initial formation in Holy Cross and was preparing for final vows and ordination, the words of Fr. Moreau more than any other spiritual mentor described the commitment I was making with my life. His vision, purpose, and zeal for educating in the hope of Christ's cross sealed my own desire to follow in his footsteps.

Whether directly or indirectly, I don't think that my experience is all that unique among Holy Cross religious. The enduring center of Fr. Moreau's life and spirituality—lived, told, and re-narrated through the lives of generations of religious—remains the inspiration for Holy Cross religious and their collaborators throughout the world. Though he lived two centuries ago, Fr. Moreau is a present day spiritual father to a modern, global, Holy Cross family. And though

his nineteenth-century French style and context are no longer familiar, the core of his teachings remains fresh and near to the human heart. We in Holy Cross rejoiced with the world when the universal Church recognized his holiness through beatification in the fall of 2007. Now he can be a spiritual mentor, model, and inspiration for all of God's people. To that end, three sketches are helpful in getting to know this holy founder: a prayerful priest, transformative educator, and visionary leader.

## Prayerful Priest

The young Basil Moreau grew up and realized his calling to the priesthood in a markedly middle class family in France. His father worked as a wine broker and young Basil helped his father to watch over the family's few cattle. At an early age, his parish priest recognized the flickering of Basil's vocational calling and took it upon himself to teach him the basics of Latin in preparation for seminary studies. Without presentation or pretention, the young Basil undertook his studies on a stool in the pasture while watching his family's cattle.



Statue of Blessed Basil Moreau from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame.

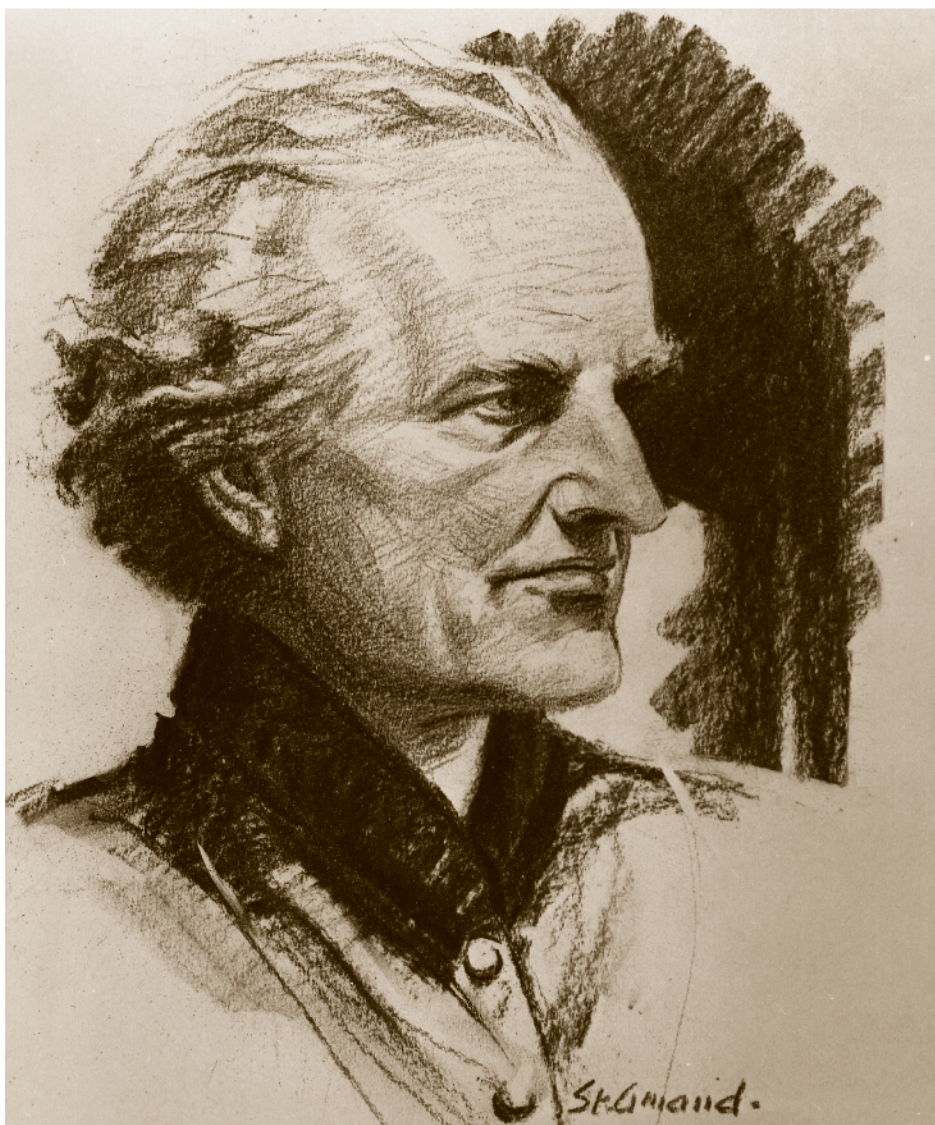
When the time came for him to enter seminary, his father walked him down the road to the seminary. Fr. Basil Moreau was ordained a priest on August 12, 1821 at the age of 22, and would be approaching fifty-two years a priest by the time that he died.

Although he was a dynamic preacher, teacher, and a wise leader, Fr. Moreau as a priest was prayerful and recollected. First and foremost he modeled resolute dedication to the discipline of the spiritual life, even when there were many demands on his limited time. He had the same spiritual director, whom he found when he was a young priest studying in Paris, for twenty-five years. From this director, he sought advice for his personal spiritual life, never neglecting his own relationship with the Lord in light of all of the work that needed to be done around him.

Dedication to prayer was what he modeled with his life and taught to those who followed him. He was very frank in telling his religious that the fervor with which they prayed, especially how they prayed as a community, was what determined how well they might do their work. Attention and a spirit of faith were what he preached; dedication and spiritual discipline were important. For Fr. Moreau knew and understood that for busy and apostolic religious who worked hard, there could be the temptation to sacrifice time in prayer. And so he says that a minister who does not pray is like a canal without water or a tree that is withered. And tiredness or weariness should not take them away from prayer, but be all the more reason to give themselves over to the Lord. And so, his spiritual advice is eminently practical:

*Never omit your daily meditation. Study the methods well, and persevere, no matter how weary you may become. If meditation proper proves too difficult...confine yourself to a few simple acts, for example: adoration of Jesus Christ, to studying and*





*trying to practice some special virtue in imitation of him, to offering him your admiration and joy and love because of his goodness.*

Fr. Moreau gave his religious wide flexibility in their spiritual lives provided that they were earnest and sincere in following and imitating the life of Jesus Christ. For his own spiritual life, Fr. Moreau meditated and commented on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, adapting them for Holy Cross novices and religious. He dedicatedly prayed the Stations of the Cross, ever trying to enter more deeply and profoundly

into the mystery of hope that comes through the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Lastly, Fr. Moreau's priesthood was characterized by the Eucharist and a relationship to a growing relationship to Jesus through it. As a priest in Holy Cross, he understood himself to be called "to the remarkable and formidable honor of making [Jesus] present every day on the altar, of receiving him every day in [his] heart by Holy Communion." He challenged himself and his priests "to plunge" their own hearts into the divine fire of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, seeking what only

Christ could bring forth: hearts strong, sturdy, after the apostles' own, and overflowing with an immense love for God and neighbor.

Fr. Moreau explained that he was a priest in order "to speak to people about God's love." Fr. Moreau's words of love were ever undergirded by a life dedicated to prayer.

### **Transformative Educator**

Before Fr. Moreau ever brought together the first Holy Cross religious, he was a dynamic teacher with a following of students. Having studied in Paris with the Sulpicians, he returned to St. Vincent's Seminary near his home to teach theology. He engaged his students with energy, believing that his seminarians should not go without any knowledge that they might need to know. So it was that a nineteenth-century French cleric went about teaching theology while also quoting scientists like Francis Bacon and classical figures like Cicero. When speaking to a group of these students about how to study, Fr. Moreau advised those under his care, "Above all, once you have chosen a book, do not stop at the surface, but go deeply into it, reflect, [and] meditate much... Cicero has said, 'I fear a man of one book,' and daily experience confirms this well-known maxim." Fr. Moreau was a man with a penetrating mind, and he demanded the same sort of intellectual rigor from his students. Later Moreau would encourage his own religious and priests to pursue not only their theological studies with zeal but also mathematics, the sciences, and other humanities.

These early days of teaching for Fr. Moreau began in practice a pedagogy that he would later write for his religious brothers and priests doing the work of education. While from the outset as a new seminary professor he demanded that that students be given a thorough and rigorous intellectual education, for Fr.

Moreau was quite clear that the mind should not be educated at the expense of the heart. And so, while he encouraged his seminary students to engage intellectual materials deeply and with recollection, he also encouraged them to engage simultaneously in their life of faith. In the same conference that he quoted Cicero he recommended that students begin to study by going into their rooms, kneeling down in front of the cross and asking Christ, the source of all knowledge and wisdom, to provide light. For Fr. Moreau, study was never far from prayer, education of the mind and heart were not disparate enterprises, and reason was intrinsically connected to faith.

Fr. Moreau was an educator *par excellence*, but for a distinct purpose. He writes in *On Christian Education*, "Education is the art of helping young people to completeness; for the Christian, this means education is helping a young person to be more like Christ, the model of all Christians." Christian education was included but was more significant to him than raising up good citizens and competent thinkers. The products of a Holy Cross education were to be persons for Christ.

### Visionary Leader

If one word could describe the way in which Fr. Moreau did ministry, prayed, led, and inspired it would be "zeal." Zeal, for Moreau was a deep and burning desire to make God known, loved and served, and thus to bring knowledge of salvation to others.

Within the first few years of the founding of Holy Cross, Fr. Moreau sent religious around the world to Algeria, Indiana, and Bangladesh. The numbers of religious in each of these places were few and sometimes they met with great difficulty, but they carried with them to their apostolates a zeal for the cross of Christ that made them effective ministers and educators.

This zeal also brought about some difficulties. And Fr. Moreau's sanctity probably rests in the difficulties he underwent at the end of his time as leader of Holy Cross. The congregation had indeed grown rapidly, spread out throughout the world, and incurred some hardships, especially financially and structurally. Fr. Moreau had given his life to the work of Holy Cross and at several points it seemed to

### Prayer for the canonization of Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C.



*Lord Jesus, Source of all that is good, you inspired Blessed Basil Moreau to found the religious family of Holy Cross to continue your mission among the People of God. May he be for us a model of the apostolic life, an example of fidelity and an inspiration as we strive to follow you.*

*May the Church proclaim his saintliness for the good of all people. Lord Jesus, you said, "Ask and you shall receive." I dare to come to you to ask that you hear my prayer. It is through the intercession of Blessed Basil Moreau that I ask...*

*May I learn to imitate his holiness and service and look to him confidently in times of need. Amen.*

be unraveling before his own eyes. In these darkest of moments, Fr. Moreau went to the chapel and prayed the Stations of the Cross. He writes that he walked from station to station looking for some sort of light, and experienced profoundly the loneliness of Jesus when he had to carry his own cross. The remarkable part of Fr. Moreau's trust in God's providence, however, was that he understood that God had called Holy Cross into being. It would be God who would ensure that its mission on earth would be fulfilled.

From this dark night forward, Moreau's last years were painful ones. Relationships with his fellow religious deteriorated. The future of the fledgling congregation looked shaky. And, ultimately, Fr. Moreau resigned as superior general of Holy Cross to live out his last days on difficult terms with the community. Moreau, however, remained convinced that the work of Holy Cross was the work of his Lord, and had the saintly ability to trust that his own leadership had blessed the association in the way God meant. Yet, there was a time that he had to let go. Late in life, Fr. Moreau lived the same cross that had transformed his prayer, teaching, and preaching. His faithfulness and trust in the providence of God especially during this time of his own suffering are perhaps the markers of his bearing its genuine hope.

### A model for our times

Whether, priest or brother, lay collaborator or friend of the Holy Cross family, Fr. Moreau is now an intercessor for teachers, preachers, and faith-filled people alike. Fr. Moreau's life did not end with glory or fame, but neither did his Lord's. He chose the cross, such that by his life he might be the bearer of Christ's hope. His holiness, then, is for all who look upon the cross of Christ and see not only a place of suffering and shame, but the entry point into Easter morning. Perhaps the Holy Cross Constitutions say it best:

*If we drink the cup each of us is poured and given, we servants will fare no better than our master. But if we shirk the cross, gone too will be our hope. It is in fidelity to what we once pledged that we will find the dying and the rising equally assured. The footsteps of those men who called us to walk in their company left deep prints, as of men carrying heavy burdens. But they did not trudge; they strode. For they had the hope. ■*





PAX

R. B. MOREAU

FONDATEUR  
DE LA  
CONGREGATION  
DE  
SAINTE CROIX



# Servant of God in Bangladesh

by Rev. Frank Quinlivan, C.S.C.

When the cause of Archbishop Ganguly was introduced in 2006 and he was declared a “servant of God,” we were informed that in order to move to the next step, to be declared “venerable,” it would need to be demonstrated that he was a person of “heroic virtue.” The consensus of those who knew him was that, in kindness, gentleness, compassion, and patience, he was an extraordinary individual. It was said by many, “I never saw him get angry.” Here was this quiet, scholarly priest, with a Master’s and Doctorate from the University of Notre Dame in Philosophy, called to leadership in terribly chaotic, turbulent and demanding times.

He was the first local bishop of the Church in Bengal. That transition from “missionary” to “local” is never totally easy. This was coupled with the Church in Bangladesh, as everywhere, struggling with the adaptations brought on by Vatican II - some racing with change and others fighting it. As a new young bishop, who had attended the Council, he understood and embraced the need for dialogue with others, the call of the laity to assume greater responsibility in and for the Church, for more collegiality with

his priests, and a great pastoral sensitivity in dealing with people. All of this resonated in his heart. He wanted the Church to be more inclusive, more open and more sensitive. The Council was not conversion for him but rather confirmation. In all of this, however, he suffered. Pressures and demands too often replaced dialogue. Sharing responsibility became pushing for power and prestige. This gentle man, who often could not be rough with anyone, was treated roughly himself.

In 1970, in the midst of these “internal” pressures, perhaps the greatest natural disaster in recorded history, in terms of loss of human life, took place in Bengal. A huge tidal wave smashed into the islands and coastal areas of the country catching people unaware and killing hundreds of thousands of people and devastating a huge area in an already poor country. While there were almost no Catholics in the area affected, the Church organized a monumental relief effort. Archbishop Ganguly, who was always moved by the suffering of any people, saw the devastation and begged for the help needed to bring relief and rehabilitation.

## Prayer for the beatification of Servant of God Bishop Theotonius Ganguly, C.S.C.



*Gracious Lord, we thank you for the gift of your servant, Archbishop Theotonius Ganguly, to the Church and to the people of Bangladesh. By his goodness, gentleness, and kindness you guided your people through time of suffering, deprivation, and war. His constant humility, self-giving, deep faith, and zeal for others were a day-star to a people in darkness and the shadow of death.*

*Lord, we ask that you bring many to know and imitate his virtues and to benefit by his devotion to you and to the service of others. We ask you through the intercession of Archbishop Ganguly to grant us the favor of...*

*May his life inspire us to follow his example and may the recognition of his virtues bring honor to the Church and glory to your name. Amen.*



Consecration of Theotonius Ganguly, C.S.C. as Bishop, 1960.

This was followed almost immediately by the Liberation War - nine months of horror and death as the people of East Bengal finally broke away from Pakistan to become Bangladesh.

It was a time of burning, killing, and rape. Christians were also caught up in the violence of the war. The Church stayed among the people - priests and religious were killed, parishes destroyed. This kind and gentle man was in anguish at the suffering and hardships of the people. He was tireless, after the war, in efforts to rebuild the country as he said, “starting from zero.” Refugees numbered in the millions.

Now also there had to be a “Bangladeshi” Church, no longer part of the Church of Pakistan. All his seminarians who were



Thousands gathered to pay their respects to their beloved Bishop Ganguly.

at studies in Pakistan were, as it were, prisoners of war and had to be brought back, but with no seminary for them, building or faculty. He needed to lead the creation of the local Church in Bangladesh.

He clearly felt overwhelmed. Prayer



and more prayer became the only way to face all of the demands. Endless streams of people came to him for help. He listened to everyone. He was available to all and people flocked to him. He suffered to the point of sleeplessness when he could not meet all the needs, and often, demands brought to him.

His gentleness and kindness were always present, but at great cost to him. He did nothing to “protect” himself. He was often criticized by others for not being more assertive, tough and critical - attitudes and behaviors which were nowhere in his nature. He was beset by what he deemed his own “unworthiness,” but compelled by his deep feeling that his responsibility had been given to him by God and the Church and that he must be faithful to it.

He died suddenly of a heart attack in 1977. He was only 57 years old. The outpouring of grief was immense. The song line that “we don’t know what we’ve got till it’s gone” captured the feeling. Even

his priest vicar for the Archdiocese said publicly, “We killed him.” There was an immediate and deep awareness that someone very good, very special, very holy had been among them. The pressures created by change, by natural disasters, by war and its aftermath, along with the pressures created by the people, had shattered his gentle heart.

Since his death the devotion to him has only increased. His picture is seen everywhere that Catholics are. There are buildings and institutions named in his honor. Every year on the anniversary of his death the cathedral is packed for the special program and liturgy. He is prayed to by so many. In the wisdom of people he is recognized as truly an extraordinary gift to us.

Someone said, “Read the beatitudes. They describe him. He lived them all.” If, again, gentleness, kindness, compassion and patience can be lived in a heroic way, then Archbishop Theotonius Ganguly, C.S.C., is a model. ■



# An African Journey

by Rev. Richard Gribble, C.S.C.

Vincent McCauley was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on March 8, 1906. In typical fashion for the day, McCauley was a product of the Catholic education system. After completing his primary education at the local parish school, St. Francis Xavier, he then entered Creighton Prep in Omaha, where he excelled in sports, especially baseball. 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.

His time at Creighton was unexpectedly cut short, however, when members of the Congregation of Holy Cross gave a mission at St. Francis Xavier Parish in the early fall of 1924. The encounter sparked in him the desire for priesthood, a latent feeling

that was, according to family members, rarely expressed. 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."

McCauley left Council Bluffs in November 1924 to join the Congregation of Holy Cross at Notre Dame. After completing his initial formation and achieving his baccalaureate degree, he professed his perpetual vows on July 2, 1929. He then was sent to the Foreign Mission Seminary (commonly called the Bengalese) in Washington, D.C. McCauley attended classes at Holy Cross College, the principal seminary for the congregation in Washington. He was ordained on June 24, 1934 in Sacred Heart Church at Notre Dame.

## **Missionary to East Africa**

The first half of McCauley's ministerial career prepared him for his significant contributions to the church of Eastern Africa. His first overseas experience was in East Bengal, where from 1936 to 1944 he served as an educator and rector of a minor seminary. The experience and knowledge he gained regarding the need for indigenous clergy was significant. Returning to the United States because of poor health, he spent the next fourteen years in Washington, D.C., as superior of the Foreign Mission Seminary and procurator of the mission.

In November 1958 McCauley and three newly ordained Holy Cross priests arrived in western Uganda. As superior of the new mission, McCauley was the natural choice for bishop when in 1961 the Mbarara diocese was split, forming the Diocese of Fort Portal. Starting from scratch, McCauley organized the diocese administratively. He approached his role as bishop from a pastoral perspective, believing that his main purpose was to implant the faith by aiding Africans to take responsibility for their local church. He explained, "The objective of a foreign missionary must be to assist the Africans among whom he works to assume the responsibility for their Church. In order to reach this objective the missionary must be satisfied to do the training and to help his African fellow priest, Brother, Sister, or lay-man to advance as quickly and thoroughly as possible."

As he had championed so strongly in Bengal, McCauley was a major promoter of the local church, Africanization, and the fostering of indigenous clergy, primarily through the vehicle of education. His efforts in this vein began locally in 1964 through his establishment of St. Mary's minor seminary in Fort Portal. Today the school continues as a senior secondary school that feeds Uganda's three national seminaries, at Gaba, Kin-



Bishop McCauley with Pope John Paul II.



yamasika, and Gulu.

McCauley's most significant contribution and greatest legacy to education was his supervision of the establishment of a national seminary in Uganda. In 1964 the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) asked McCauley to direct the project. His contacts in the United States and Rome for financial backing, as well as his significant experience, made him the logical choice to head the project.

Although the project was plagued by design problems, insufficient funds, and cost overruns, McCauley managed to keep it on course. He was forced to constantly beg funds from Roman congregations, especially the Pontifical Work of St. Peter the Apostle, which provided the bulk of the construction monies. While McCauley was forced on several occasions to cut back the original design and was often frustrated to the point of offering his resignation, the project was eventually completed and the seminary dedicated on October 21, 1970. Grateful for his efforts, Emmanuel Nsubuga, Archbishop of Kampala and chairman of the UEC, wrote to McCauley: "Your Lordship, believe me, since the Uganda Episcopal Conference put all trust in you for the building of the Gaba National Seminary, you have done wonderfully. Without your indefatigable effort and skill, the construction of Gaba National Seminary would not be what it is now."

Vincent McCauley's promotion of the local church was also manifest in his work in the formation of institutions that would continue his work long after his death. From the very outset, he was integrally involved with the Uganda hierarchy. He expressed his sense of integrity and personal involvement with his fellow bishops in a letter to the apostolic pronuncio in Zambia: "Each day brings us an increasing sense of the responsibility for the welfare of the Church on the part of the Bishops and the need to foster frater-



nal cooperation in order that the best interest of Christ among the people of God be promoted, deepened and extended."

McCauley played a key role in systematizing the Uganda hierarchy. Bishop Joseph Willigers of Jinja called McCauley "the main thrust in shaping the new Uganda Episcopal Conference." He continued, "From the beginning it was obvious to me that Bishop McCauley was a major organizing power amongst the Uganda Bishops." Bishop Paul Kalanda (local ordinary in Fort Portal from 1991 to 2003) wrote that McCauley "played a very big role in organizing the Uganda Episcopal Conference."

McCauley was thrust into positions of leadership in the UEC from the very outset. He served as vice-chairman of the conference on three different occasions and was also a member of its executive committee. In 1970 he served as chairman of the UEC's Social Services Commission and was a member of the Ecumenical Commission. Not only was McCauley highly regarded for his organizational skills, he was equally well respected for his advice. Bishops from many areas came to Fort Portal to seek his counsel in many matters, most especially the

initial organization of a diocese.

McCauley's significant contributions to the local church through the promotion of education and the UEC were complemented by his construction of a new cathedral in Fort Portal. On March 20, 1966, a severe earthquake struck western Uganda, killing 104, injuring 510, and leaving 6,000 homeless. Among the significant casualties was the cathedral, which was a total loss. Almost immediately McCauley traveled to the United States to raise money to rebuild. On April 21, 1968, the new cathedral, called Virika, was dedicated, with Cardinal Lauren Rugambwa of Tanzania as the principal celebrant. The church stands today as a monument to McCauley's belief in the church of Fort Portal.

#### **Chairman and Secretary General of AMECEA**

In 1964 Vincent McCauley was elected chairman of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA), an organization founded in 1961. Started at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the Interterritorial Episcopal Board of Eastern Africa (ITEBEA) described its mandate as being "to pool information concerning the views and actions of the five Episcopal Conferences, and to carry out projects of common interest and seek solutions to common problems, when so requested by the national Episcopal conferences."

The Eastern African bishops recast ITEBEA as AMECEA in 1964 while meeting at the third session of Vatican II, when they also elected McCauley chairman. The 1964 session also more clearly articulated AMECEA's objectives, the foremost of which was to promote intercommunication and cooperation among local churches in Eastern Africa. Next, the body sought ways to support the apostolate in light of the new conciliar documents. Third, the bishops wished to study problems of common interest in Eastern Africa and to find solutions. Lastly, the association



Educating the youth of Uganda was a priority of Bishop McCauley.

hoped to render services in a collaborative effort to meet the needs of the people of God.

McCauley led the nascent AMECEA body through its early years. Early efforts of the conference included the establishment of St. John's Corner, a center for alcoholic clergy, the sponsorship of Vatican II summaries by the British theologian Adrian Hastings, and the expansion of AMECEA's departments to serve the Eastern African church more widely and productively. By 1973, when his tenure as chairman ended, McCauley had placed AMECEA on solid financial ground.

Clearly the crowning accomplishment of McCauley's tenure as AMECEA chairman was the creation of the Gaba Pastoral Institute. Vatican II's strong emphasis on the apostolate of the laity prompted the AMECEA executive board to seek some response. The board commissioned a group of expatriate religious to examine the possibility of starting an English-medium

residential college to train clergy, religious, and laity for teaching religion and supervising this teaching. A positive report from the committee led McCauley, as chairman of AMECEA, to lead the organizational effort. He successfully petitioned Archbishop Nsubuga for use of the old Gaba Seminary buildings in Kampala. McCauley was able to secure sufficient funds for renovation of the buildings, allowing the Gaba Pastoral Institute to open on February 1, 1968, for its initial ten-month program.

McCauley's association with AMECEA transitioned in 1973 with his appointment as secretary general. He had left Fort Portal on December 31, 1972, having retired his position as local ordinary. Simultaneously, AMECEA's Secretary General, Killian Flynn, died while on a home visit to Ireland. The combination of events left McCauley free to accept the vacant position of secretary general. Now approaching the twilight of his episcopal and missionary

career, McCauley continued to promote AMECEA by making suggestions for new avenues the body could take in its mission to serve the Eastern African church.

As secretary general, McCauley was now responsible for the organization of the triennial meetings of the bishops. During his tenure he used these sessions to address issues pertinent to the local church. The theme of the 1973 plenary session, "Planning for the Church in Africa in the 1980s," illustrated where McCauley hoped to take AMECEA in the immediate future. Small Christian Communities

***Prayer for the beatification  
of Servant of God Bishop  
Vincent McCauley, C.S.C.***



*God, loving Father, we thank you for the gift of your servant Bishop Vincent McCauley to the Church and to the people of eastern Africa and in particular to the diocese of Fort Portal. By his goodness, kindness, gentleness and innovation, you guided your people through times of ignorance, poverty and suffering. His constant endurance of physical pain, humility, self-giving, deep faith and pastoral zeal were an example to many people.*

(SCCs) was one significant area of study. This issue was raised more directly in 1976 under the theme "Building Christian Communities in Africa." The bishops stated in the session legislation: "The Christian communities we are trying to build are simply the most local incarnations of the one holy Catholic and apostolic Church. . . . The task of building Christian communities is more creating and developing awareness of what our renewed vision of the Church means in practical terms and relationships, than one of building new structures." With this

mandate each diocese was asked to formulate a plan for implementation of this vision. At the 1979 plenary a more forceful statement was published by the study conference, stressing that SCCs were the best way to develop African Christianity: "Small communities also seem the most effective means of making the Gospel message truly relevant to African cultures and traditions. By participating in the life of the Church at this most local level, Christians will foster the gradual and steady maturing of the young Church."

In August 1979 Vincent McCauley stepped aside as secretary general of AMECEA and was replaced by his chosen protégé, Father Joseph Mukwaya of Uganda. His formal retirement did not mean, however, that his presence and influence were not still felt at AMECEA. On the contrary, he assisted in many different roles, substituting for the chairman or secretary general when needed and was always ready for input when asked.

During his "retirement" McCauley left one more significant mark on the Eastern African church through the establishment of the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA), today the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Planning for a postgraduate school for clergy had been ongoing since November 1973, when Cardinal Angelo Rossi of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples requested that all African episcopal conferences should investigate such a school for the English-speaking countries. After the work of various committees concluded that the project was viable, AMECEA took responsibility for the effort, placing McCauley, with his vast previous experience as a fund-raiser, in charge of the development efforts. McCauley was also involved with the design and construction, for which his experience with the Gaba National Seminary was invaluable.

Although McCauley did not live to see

the day, CHIEA welcomed twenty-one students on September 3, 1984. Courses in biblical theology, dogmatics, moral theology, pastoral studies, liturgy, church history, spiritual theology, church law, management, social communications, pastoral counseling, and catechesis were available. CHIEA's aim was "to be the cradle of a Catholic University for Eastern Africa and to cater for specialized and advanced ecclesiastical studies through teaching and research in an African cultural environment." One year later, on August 18, 1985, Pope John Paul II formally opened the school.

### Conclusion

Vincent McCauley battled skin cancer his entire adult life, but his death came from pulmonary problems. For about a

year he began to experience pulmonary hemorrhages, which grew progressively worse. He returned to the United States and, as always, went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for treatment. There on November 1, 1982, while undergoing surgery, he died. Present with him at the time was his longtime friend John Croston, a fellow African missionary and Holy Cross priest, who stated, "A valiant man of God died, but a saint was born."

Vincent McCauley, priest, missionary, and bishop, returned to God having served the Lord and his people faithfully for forty-eight years. At heart, he was a missionary and a faithful servant of God. He worked long and hard in the service of God's people through promotion of the local church. His legacy in East Bengal/Bangladesh and East Africa is assured. ■



Bishop McCauley always made himself available to the people.



# The Family Rosary Crusade

by Rev. Willy Raymond, C.S.C.

At a lunch during our June 1971 province retreat at Stonehill College I had the privilege, as a newly ordained priest, to sit next to the renowned Father Patrick Peyton. At one point during the meal he quietly placed his right hand over my left and said, "Young Father, I think that our Blessed Mother is asking you to come work for Family Rosary." I was flattered by the suggestion until I discovered that he had made a similar offer to the other members of my ordination class. Providentially, 29 years later, in 2000, I found myself assigned to Family Theater Productions in Hollywood. Working here, surrounded by many reminders of his phenomenal ministry in Hollywood and more aware than ever of his legacy, I give thanks to God for the great gift of Father Peyton to our world, our Church, our families and to our Holy Cross community.

## **A Brief update on the Cause:**

Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., completed



his days on earth at the Little Sisters of the Poor in San Pedro, CA on June 3, 1992. ■ Five years later, in 1997, Bishop Sean O'Malley of Fall River, Massachusetts introduced Peyton's cause for beatification. ■ O'Malley was transferred to Florida and eventually to Boston and the cause was transferred to Baltimore. ■ In 2001 Rome declared Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. 'Servant of God' and granted a 'nihil obstat,' clearing the way for the next stage which took place on the diocesan level. ■ Archbishop Edward O'Brien, of Baltimore celebrated the conclusion of the diocesan stage early in the summer of 2010 and sent the testimonies on to Rome to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

## **A Force at Vatican II for Mary and the Domestic Church:**

Scott Hahn says of Marian devotion: "The Church discussed this in a dazzling way in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Though this council produced no single document focused exclusively on Mary, its documents as a whole included more Marian teaching than any other ecumenical council in Church history. In fact, the Marian teaching of Vatican II outweighed that of all previous councils combined."

Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., was at Vatican II and intimately involved in helping to shape the Church's thinking and teaching about Mary. He was delighted at the length and quality of the Council's Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and the role of Mary detailed in Chapter VIII. The Council viewed Mary as 'Mother of the Church' (no. 54) and the Christian home as a 'domestic Church' (LG no. 11). Father Peyton lobbied cardinals, bishops and even the pope, to make sure that the Council covered this important territory. Because of his importance on the American Catholic scene and in my own life as a Holy Cross priest working in Hollywood at Family Theater Productions which he

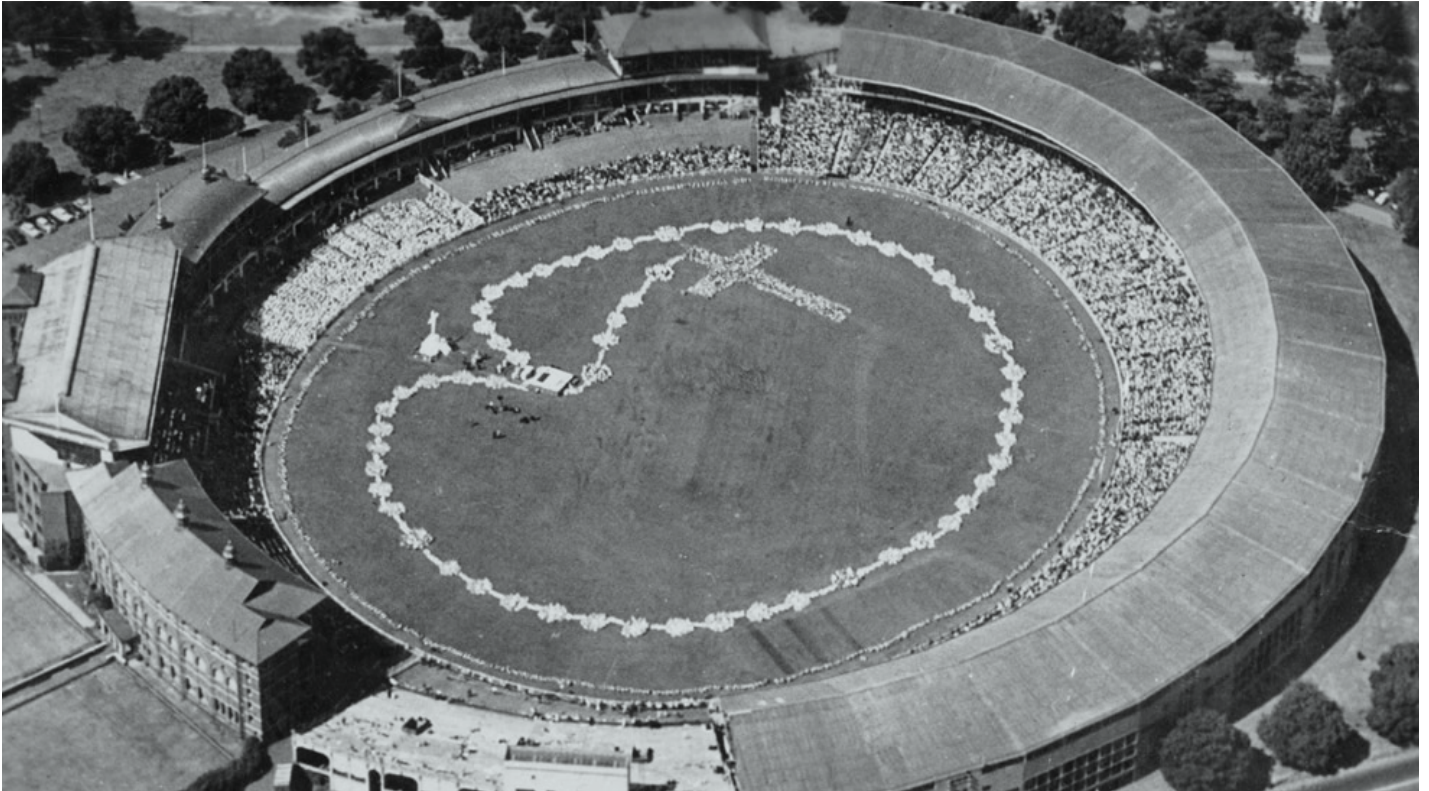
founded, I would like to spend much of this short essay on his life and spirituality and the genius of his methodology for evangelizing through the mass media.

In 2003, the Archdiocese of San Francisco celebrated 150 years of dramatic history. In that century and a half there had been gold rushes, earthquakes, the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Bay Bridge, the dedication of a new cathedral, the assassination of a mayor, World Series and NFL Championships and a visit by Pope John Paul II. None of these gained first place as the most significant event in the history of the Archdiocese. According to the archivist of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, that distinction went to the October 7, 1961 Family Rosary Crusade Rally for which more than 500,000 people crammed into Golden Gate Park. They came to pray together and to hear the powerful message of Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. His message, "The Family that Prays Together Stays Together," and "A World at Prayer is a World at Peace."

Who was this man and why did so many millions hunger to hear his message? The late actress Loretta Young responded to this question in a surprising but clear statement: "I never knew a man who loved a woman more than Father Peyton loved Our Blessed Mother."

Fortunately, Father Peyton himself in radio interviews and in his autobiography, *All For Her*, spoke with passion and transparency about the foundations of his Marian spirituality and his priestly vocation in Holy Cross. "I was born on January 9, 1909 in a picturesque Valley of County Mayo. On one side were the Ox Mountains and on the other the Atlantic Ocean."

"From my earliest memories, I saw my father with the Rosary beads in his hands and my mother holding hers. My older brothers and sisters and I knelt around them, praying. My father began with the Sign of the Cross, then the Apostles' Creed,



Aerial view of a Rosary Crusade, called the Living Rosary, from Melbourne, Australia, 1951.

the Our Fathers, the Hail Marys, the Glory Be's. What impressed me most was the voice of my mother talking to Mary: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen!'"

"For the first nineteen years of my life this was our daily practice as I grew from childhood, to boyhood, to my teens. In good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, in poverty and hard work, we ended each day speaking to Jesus and His Mother, offering them the greatest tribute that could possibly be given, making the greatest act of faith, and honoring Mary above all the angels and saints. Because of the daily family Rosary, my home was for me a cradle, a school, a university, a library, and most of all, a little church."

"In May 1928, my brother and I emigrated to Scranton, Pa, to join our three sisters. A day or two before we left him forever, my father asked me to kneel before a picture of the Sacred Heart. He address-

sed Our Lord with an intensity from his heart as he entrusted me completely to His care and protection. Then he said words, which were engraved on my heart: "Be faithful to Our Lord in America." At the railway station I saw my mother for the last time. She waved her handkerchief until the train disappeared from sight. My heart was crushed with sorrow, and



Pope John Paul II and Fr. Peyton "wrestle" in 1987.

tears blinded my eyes."

"Not in our wildest imaginings did my parents or my brother or I dream what Our Lord had in store for us in America. He called my brother to the priesthood from the coal mines of Scranton. He called me from being the janitor in Saint Joseph's Cathedral. In the fall of 1929 we entered the seminary at Notre Dame, Indiana. There we continued the family Rosary with our new family, the priests and seminarians of Holy Cross."

"Two years before my ordination I was stricken with a serious illness. I was forced to leave the seminary. At the infirmary at Notre Dame, I learned the three lessons that have directed me on my journey.

**1. The first lesson was my total dependence on my neighbor**—the doctors, the nurses and their assistants. How I learned that famous line from literature: 'No man is an island.' We are all one family, all one in Christ, all members of his body. We form



with Him a 'Mystical Body' that is closer even than the branches and the leaves of a tree are to the trunk that gives them life." 2. In the infirmary I deteriorated until the doctors said, 'Try prayer, our remedies are useless.' One of my former teachers heard the bad news and hurried to visit me. He saw me at my worst—discouraged, depressed, hopeless. His words were the most important ever spoken to me. 'Mary is alive,' He said. 'She will be as good to you as you think she can be. It all depends on you and your faith.'"

"That night, he activated my dormant faith. It was like setting a match to a haystack sprinkled with gasoline. Thanks to the family that always prayed the Rosary, I had come to know who Mary was and that Jesus Christ, her Son, had entrusted me to her love and care. I asked her with all my heart and soul to pray to her Son for my cure."

"Like the dark night that is replaced by dawn and the dawn by the sun, she brought me back to life. I was certain our Blessed Mother was taking part in my healing. I am not describing a miracle. I am giving wit-

ness to the power of Mary's intercession and the quiet, unsensational way she works. I begged the doctors to examine me once more and received their report in a letter. Like a prisoner waiting for the verdict of the jury, I opened the letter and saw my freedom, my new lease on life, my second spring."

"The first words I spoke were, 'Mary, I hope I never disgrace you.' My superiors sent me back to the seminary. On June 15, 1941, I knelt beside my brother in Sacred Heart Church on the campus of Notre Dame and was made a priest. I remembered my father's words on seeing the photograph of us both wearing priests' garments: 'I cry with joy to see what God has done for our two boys.'"

"How could I pay back my debts to our Lord, His Mother and my family? I prayed for an answer. Seven months after my ordination, while on retreat, God gave me the answer—the Family Rosary Crusade."

"It was frightening! It was impossible! How could I do it? I spoke these words to Our Lord in a small chapel: 'I can't do it. But, My Lord, you can, and I ask you to do

it.' It was the best prayer I ever uttered.

**3. I had learned my third lesson: Without God, I can do nothing.** I took that lesson to heart.

And God answered me in a way I would never have dreamed."

Father Peyton then describes his use of the mass media to spread his message of prayer, family unity and the rosary. He became a media pioneer in Hollywood on radio, television and film. He befriended hundreds of Hollywood actors, writers, directors and producers. He became a master at begging for help from supporters of both great and modest means everywhere. He used his growing celebrity status to organize rosary rallies around the world in a great, ongoing, global crusade to save the family by linking it to family prayer and the rosary, the glue that would hold the family together. Over the decades, more than 28 million persons participated in the rosary rallies in gatherings of hundreds of thousands and, in some cases, millions.

### The Theological and Pastoral Genius of Father Peyton's Ministry

Several years ago, Father Arthur Colgan, C.S.C., the immediate past provincial superior of the Eastern Province of Holy Cross, reflected on the influence of Father Peyton's ministry. Those reflections have been a catalyst to help me organize my own thoughts on his extraordinary effectiveness and his ongoing importance for the Church, for families and especially for priests. I would like to list those characteristics because they are the mature fruit of his early formation in a Catholic home, and in a religious order with a special devotion to Mary, the Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

**The following characteristics are distinctive marks of Father Peyton's ministry:**

1. His commitment to give a prominent place to daily **devotion to Mary** in the



Fr. Peyton in front of a billboard located in Manila, Philippines.





Fr. Peyton distributes rosaries to children in Caracas, Venezuela, 1966.

Catholic experience of discipleship, in the Catholic popular imagination, in the culture of a people, and in church teaching.

2. His desire to make **the rosary a tool** for nurturing devotion to Mary, thus giving it a special place in the lives of ordinary Catholics.

3. The importance he gave to the place of **prayer in Christian Life**, family life and the life of the disciple of Christ.

4. His concern for **the fragility of the family** in post World War II America, especially during an era of rapid economic, social, political and technological change.

5. His emphasis on the important and **unique role of the family in the development and transmission of the Catholic faith**. His stress on the significance of healing, renewing and strengthening families, the basic social cells of any society, in order to make the whole healthy. In this context, he shares some responsibility for Vatican II's LUMEN GENTIUM, in which document the family is singled out as a "small" or "Domestic Church." Here, the family has a social and ecclesial reality of primary importance.

6. His use of **the media** as a formidable tool of the mission. He was interested in making effective use of radio, television, film and printing to promote his message for the spiritual well being of families. (If available at the time, he would also

have made use of the Internet and taken advantage of the rapid expansion of new platforms for promoting his message including, podcasting, interactive CD-Roms and video games, etc.)

7. His commitment to **evangelization of the masses**. He strategically planned rosary rallies and crusades to reach people in great numbers and in their homes and neighborhoods beyond Church buildings. He really believed in a strong, robust public presence of the Church as a witness in the heart of society. Hence he conducted large rallies in ballparks, stadiums and public gathering places in such well-known cities as San Francisco, New York, Sao Paulo, Bombay (Mumbai) and Manila.

#### **Prayer for the beatification of Servant of God Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.**



*Dear Lord Jesus, Father Peyton devoted his priestly life to strengthening the families of the world by calling them to pray together every day, especially the Rosary. His message is as important for us as it was during his life on earth. We beg you, therefore, to hasten the day of his beatification so that your faithful people everywhere who remember his message that "the family that prays together stays together," will imitate him in his devotion to your Mother and ours, and will be inspired by his holy life to draw ever closer to you with childlike confidence and love. Amen.*

8. His commitment to **work closely with laymen and laywomen** and train thousands of lay catechists and lay agents of evangelization. These were all in support of the local Church. He always built up and left behind a "people structure," as it were, a corps of people trained with the

message and able to use the technology he provided to continue the work of evangelization.

9. His desire to be **collaborative, international and at the service of the local and universal Church**.

10. Finally, **his personal holiness** that engendered an ongoing devotion to him and his work among people of all ages and backgrounds, motivating them to be open to Jesus, the Gospel and to the ministry of the Church. His devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, to the Rosary, his daily holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament and his constant prayer were always the central passions of his life.

Like most of the Saints, Blessed Mother aside, Patrick Peyton was not perfect, not without flaws. He was not easy to work with, he was often too demanding, frequently stubborn, sometimes thoughtless of the needs and feelings of others, especially his Holy Cross brothers. But was he a saint? We will find out what the Church in her wisdom thinks in the years ahead. As for me, the hand that reached out and covered mine at lunch I believe was the hand of one of God's great instruments of grace.

#### **A Final Thought:**

Allow me to conclude with the remarkably pertinent prayer of that master teacher now occupying the Chair of Peter:

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
you have given the world its true light.  
Jesus, your Son—the Son of God.  
You abandoned yourself completely  
To God's call*

*And thus became a wellspring  
Of the goodness which flows forth from him.  
Show us Jesus. Lead us to him,  
Teach us to know and love him  
So that we too can become  
capable of true love  
and be fountains of living water  
in the midst of a thirsting world. ■*

# The Great Flavian

Contributed by the Canadian Province of Holy Cross

Born on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1907 in St-Louis-de-Richelieu, Doria Laplante was the seventh child of Honoré Laplante and Louise Thérour, a Christian family of modest means with nine children.

Doria completed his elementary studies in the village school as did his sisters and brothers. Wishing to become a religious in the Congregation of Holy Cross, he entered the novitiate in Pierrefonds when he was sixteen years old. On August 16, 1923, he pronounced his first vows and received the name of Flavian. Five years later, on August 16, 1928, he professed final vows.

With his studies completed, Brother Flavian turned his talents to teaching in Canada. Many former students of Notre Dame College in Montreal remember his dedication, among other things, to the construction of a huge slide in snow and ice. Many hours supposedly set aside for leisure activities were devoted to this effort. Still, he dreamed about going to the missions. On October 17, 1932, his superiors commissioned him to Bengal along with three other Holy Cross religious. At the time of their farewell at St. Joseph's Oratory on Mount Royal, he met Brother André Bessette who gave him his blessing and assured him of his prayers. "You are leaving," he added, "I am envying you!" After 45 days of traveling by train and by boat he finally met his fellow religious in Chittagong, Bengal.

From 1933 to 1962, Brother Flavian was a full-time professor and school principal. Everywhere he is remembered as a competent and faithful educator. Whether it was in Barisal, Paderishibpur, Noakhali, where he named his school "Brother Andre's School," St. Placid's School in Chittagong or Diang, he was always ready to serve and he found ingenious ways to interest the students in extracurricular activities. For a while, he was even secretary and accountant for the Bishop of Chittagong.

His heart moved instinctively to the orphans in the villages situated along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, including Cox Bazar, Teknaf, Moheshkali, Chakoria and Anowara. He was particularly interested in the community of poor fishermen in Bashkali. They were all Hindus of the lowest class. The orphans and the abandoned children moved him profoundly. For them he opened a boarding school. Whether they were Hindu, Muslim or Christian mattered not. They all had a privileged place in his apostolic heart. After a terrible famine during the Second



Brother Flavian before his departure to Bangladesh, 1932.

World War, he became the protector of wandering and abandoned children. In 1940, he opened an orphanage for 200 children. He became their father and their mother, looking after all their needs in spite of their misery and extreme poverty. He was interested in their education and encouraged them to pursue their studies, even at the most elementary level. The children of the fishermen particularly drew on all his energy. He gathered them at Diang, in an orphanage-school that today is an educational complex for thousands of students.

In order to understand deeply the tasks and the difficulties of the fishermen,

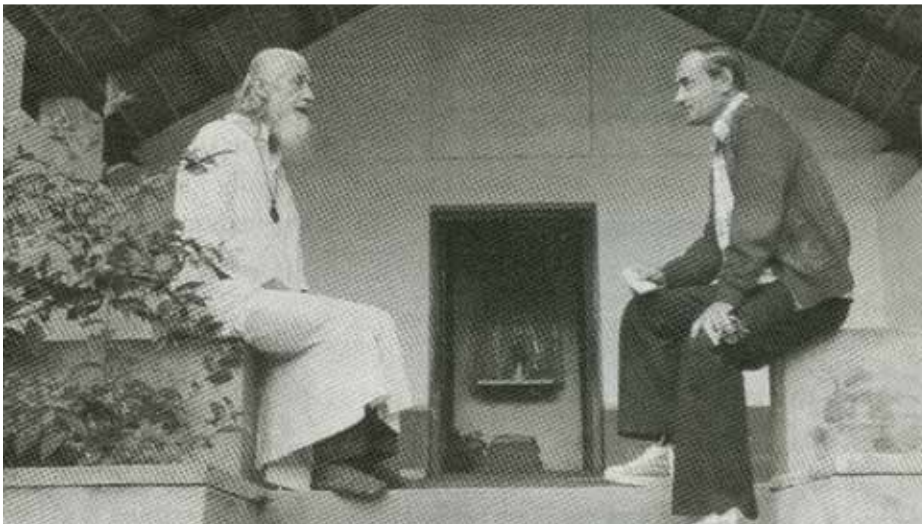
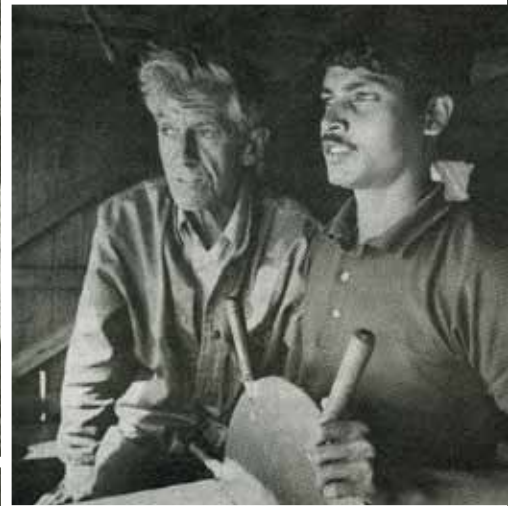
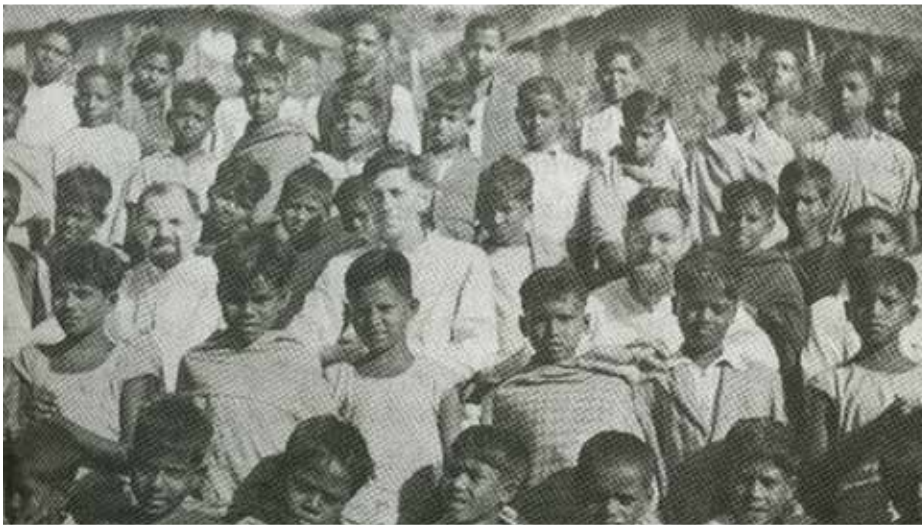
Brother Flavian accompanied them out into the open sea for days. Their lot weighted heavily on his heart. He invested all sorts of tricks to turn away the thieves. In order to dissuade them, he carried a firearm that he never used. He even demanded the help of the police to support his efforts and to assure their security. In order to encourage better fishing, he undertook the whole process of getting their boats motorized. He set up the "Kalidaha Fishing Project." He also arranged for the construction of motorized boats and organized a technical school to teach the skills related to construction and repair of boats and motors.

Brother Flavian's dream didn't stop there. He wanted a dispensary, especially for women who were not able to go to a male doctor. The women also needed education. He organized literacy classes as well as sewing classes to produce ordinary clothing. Even a savings cooperative was set up for them. He was convinced that no change could take place in the community without the active participation of the women. He often went to congratulate them for their presence and their efforts.

When a large piece of land was offered to him in Diang, Flavian had a new dream. He established a Christian community by bringing together people from Noakhali, Chittagong, Barisal, Raozan and other places. There were more than 20 families. Thus it was that two sectors of a single village were formed: Miriam Para (Mary Parish) and Joseph Para (Joseph Parish). Today, more than 120 families live there and form a new parish officially instituted during the large pilgrimage in February 2009.

In the course of all these works, Brother Flavian prayed to the Virgin Mary. In her honor he thought of building a grotto on the model of that of Lourdes. His desire was fulfilled in 1974. Then, leaving active life, he retired to the silence and solitude of his ashram. In the shadow of the grotto





Images of Brother Flavian with the many orphans he cared for, fisherman he embraced, and, in his older years, his life as a shadhu.

**Prayer for the beatification  
of Servant of God Brother  
Flavian Laplante, C.S.C.**



Lord God,  
We give you joyful thanks for the  
life of Brother Flavian Laplante,  
apostle to the fishermen and  
hermit of Diang. Through his  
prayers, his apostolic courage and  
concern for others, he restored  
dignity to neglected people in Ban-  
gladesh and provided for the care  
of orphans. His devotion to Mary,  
your mother, his enthusiasm and  
his humble life of generous service  
to the poor and needy invite us to  
dedicate ourselves to you by a life  
of service to those in need.

We beseech you, therefore, to  
hasten the day of his beatification  
for the good of all people and in  
particular for the Church and the  
people of Bangladesh.

Lord, you said, "Ask and you  
shall receive." We come to you  
to ask that you hear our prayer.  
It is through the intercession of  
Brother Flavian Laplante that we  
ask...

May Brother Flavian's example  
encourage us to carry our own  
cross with patience and to strive to  
imitate his virtues in our daily life  
of service to others. We ask this  
grace of you who live and reign in  
union with the Father and the Holy  
Spirit now and forever. Amen

he lived very simply as a shadhu or hermit. His program was made up of hours of contemplation between midnight and dawn, of work on the hillsides and of frugal meals consisting above all of fruits and vegetables received from people who came to consult him, pray with him and sometimes share his life.

In order to respond to the wish of

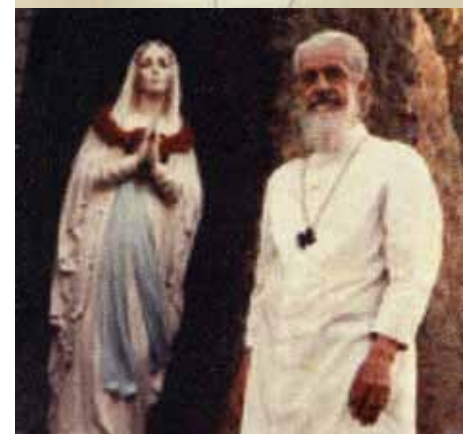
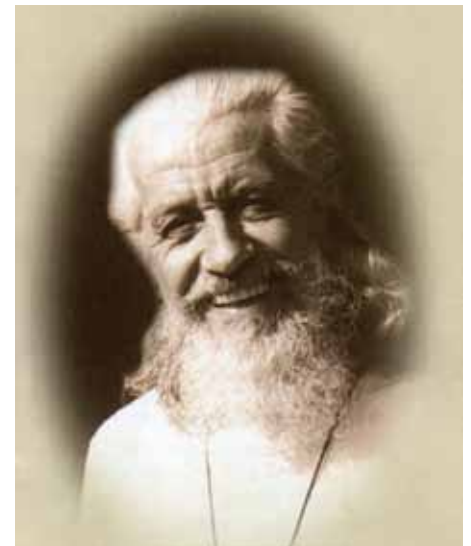
Christians and to intensify the devotion to Mary, Bishop Joachim Rozario, C.S.C., Bishop of Chittagong, proclaimed Diang a "National Site of Pilgrimage in Bangladesh" on December 16, 1976. Thus it is that each year the annual pilgrimage of the Virgin of Diang brings together thousands of persons coming from every corner of the country. This crowd prays and sings its praises continuously during two days and one night. The bishops of the country present at the conclusion of the pilgrimage offer a solemn concelebration of the Eucharist in front of the grotto.

Throughout his life, Brother Flavian had to face innumerable difficulties: threats from thieves and pirates who were always on the lookout, difficulties responding to the financial needs of the orphanage and in feeding all the orphans, problems with the lack of water, and so on. He struggled without becoming discouraged. With humility, he placed all his difficulties in the hands of God and managed to convince us of his intense union with the Lord. He never failed to intercede for everyone: educating, caring for the sick, listening to the people. The humility, dedication and selflessness of Brother Flavian led us all to make him our intercessor before God and to confide our needs to him. Many times we saw him finish his days work in prayer, even falling asleep in contemplation at the feet of the Lord in the chapel.

At the beginning of 1981, his health became a serious preoccupation for the community. His superiors invited him to go to Canada for the necessary care. Brother Flavian categorically refused. Having lived 49 years with the poor, he chose to die in their land as a grain of wheat cast into the earth. He said, "If I leave them, the Lord will never forgive me. My last desire is to die here and be buried among my children." His wish was heard. After suffering greatly, he passed away peacefully in the arms of his religious superior and praying, "Come

Lord Jesus." He entered into the home of the Father on June 19, 1981. In spite of torrential rain, people came to offer him their final homage. He is buried in the new cemetery of Diang where a young child had also just been buried.

Brother Flavian's reputation for sanctity only grew. On February 13, 2009, feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Bishop Patrick D'Rozario, C.S.C., Bishop of Chittagong, proclaimed Brother Flavian Servant of God in the presence of eight thousand pilgrims. Steps toward his beatification are now underway. We can only pray that the glory of God be manifest through the beatification of his Servant of God, an incomparable apostle of poor fishermen. ■



Brother Flavian at the Grotto he dedicated in honor of Mary.





Your questions answered...

# Plain!Speaking

by Rev. Herbert C. Yost, C.S.C.

*I once heard we are all called to be saints. What does that mean exactly, and since everyone I know, including me, is a sinner, how is it possible?*

*Jim from Indiana*

This may look like a really simple question, but in reality, it's complicated!!! OK...here goes...

In the Catholic Church, a saint is one who has been formally declared to be in heaven through a very specific process leading to canonization. This process examines the person's virtues, his or her herocity, their writings if any, and whether any miracles have been attributed to his/her intercession. Most of the saints have been declared so by the Popes over the centuries. Several saints have been canonized by popular devotion or acclamation (Benedict Labre is a good example).

On another level, every time we recite the Creed, we express our belief in "the communion of saints." This refers to the unity that is shared by the Catholic community on earth, in heaven, and in purgatory. All are members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and all share the full graces of that membership. But even in the back of our mind, we tend to think that "the communion of saints" doesn't really include us. Saints are far holier than we are...they are sinless...perfect...somehow not quite human.

Now on a third level, we all know or have known some really saintly people. They could be members of our family, members of our parish or our local community. For my own personal hall of saints, the one defining characteristic is that they faced extremely adverse circumstances in life but refused to become bitter

or angry. Instead they radiate good cheer, happiness, wisdom, hospitality...it's always a delight to spend time with them.

Moving away from the Catholic Church for a moment, every major world religion has its saints. They don't go through a formal process of canonization, but they are universally recognized within their particular faith expression as wise, holy people. They are dedicated to worship and study of the divine, and deeply committed to virtuous living. They commonly share their insights with others. Many have been martyrs for their particular faith.

Protestant denominations say we already are saints simply by virtue of baptism. Yes, there are saints in heaven, but every baptized person living on earth is also a saint. They point to countless references in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul. If you read those references, notice how the word "saint" is always used in the plural, and always refers to those who are consecrated to God by Baptism and who are called to continue the work of Jesus on earth according to our unique gifts and personal qualities.

Now a very common misconception is reflected in your question, J. You asked how is it possible to be a saint given that everyone you know, including yourself, is a sinner. Well, it never has been said that a saint is sinless. The only two people ever declared sinless are the Mother of God and Jesus.

Every saint, living or dead, has been or is a sinner. Some often call themselves the worse of sinners, sometimes pathologically so. Numerous times in his letters, St. Paul refers to his personal sinfulness. Peter, in the storm-tossed boat, asks Jesus to depart from him

"for I am a sinful man." Augustine's *Confessions* and Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* describe the struggles these men had with personal sinfulness. Francis of Assisi, St. Benedict, Ignatius Loyola, Julian of Norwich, the two Theresa's and John of the Cross, right on up to Mother Theresa and John XXIII – every saint who has left us their writings describes their struggles with personal sin and their perplexity – to use St. Paul's words – as to why they do the things they don't want to do and can't serve the Lord as they wish they could.

But a saint is one who *recognizes and acknowledges* his or her sinfulness. S/he is acutely aware that without the grace of God, s/he is nothing. This acute awareness gives rise to an overwhelming sense of gratitude that God blesses them so much despite their sinfulness. This overwhelming gratitude then turns the saint outwards, towards the world and all its peoples. In prayer or in action, they do all they can to be "another Christ" either in their little corner of the world, or in the world itself. Look at the people you consider to be saintly. Isn't it true that a joyful gratitude and humility is one of their great personal characteristics?

I might conclude with this little observation: the Church does not *make* anyone a saint; it *recognizes* a saint. So too with ourselves. We don't make anyone a saint, but we can sure recognize them in our midst!

Questions for Fr. Herb? Send to:  
Plain!Speaking  
c/o Priests of Holy Cross  
Indiana Province  
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