



Fr John McCarron, S.J.
(1907-1975. In Zambia 1957-1963)

16 July 1975

John McCarron was known as Sean. Even as a novice, his qualities of leadership and practical common sense were recognized. He was self-confident, sure of his judgment and, on occasion, forthright in urging his point of view. His self-confidence stood to him in counseling and directing the large number of people, both clerical and lay, who sought his advice.

He was born in Dublin on 1 October 1907 and entered the Society in 1925. After the normal course of studies, juniorate, philosophy, regency and theology, he was ordained at Milltown Park in 1938.

For 15 years (1942 to 1957) Fr Sean was the Central Director of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association (PTAA), with the exception of the first year when he was the assistant. He possessed tremendous drive and was demanding of others, both as to the quality and quantity of their work. Some within the Society said he was too demanding. However he had the knack or ability to draw around him people of talent and dedication who would give of their best.

He had a genius for organization and administration which showed itself in the restructuring of the Pioneer office, in the conducting of the Pioneer affairs and also in the overall direction of the memorable Golden Jubilee of the Association in 1949 which entailed a huge parade through the centre of Dublin and a massive meeting in Croke Park. He founded and launched the Pioneer Magazine in 1948 which quickly built up a good circulation in spite of the pundits who said that such a magazine would not be a practical proposition.

He left the Association to be posted to Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) for the express purpose of building and setting up Charles Lwanga Teacher Training College. His right hand man was Br Pat McElduff. It was quite a showpiece with even a fountain on the campus. He was a tremendous worker but at the same time he showed great kindness towards workers and foremen. The firms he dealt with had great respect for him as he was always so straight and clear about what he wanted. He lived where he worked, in a small house, the inside of which was littered with plans everywhere, on the floor, on the table and on his bed. Zambia was a very happy episode in his life which revealed his charm and affability.

Back in Ireland he founded Manresa Retreat House and was the first Superior of Loyola House, the provincial's new residence. His health had not been good for a number of years though he always made light of this. The end came suddenly early in the morning of 16 July 1975 in Limerick where he had been living.