

Dear Friends in Christ,

This week, on Saturday, September 26th we celebrate our national feast of Canadian Martyrs. Among them were Jean de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues and Noël Chabanel.

Jean de Brébeuf, S.J. was born March 25, 1593 in Normandy, France and ordained into the priesthood at the age of 33. Fr. de Brébeuf was the first of the Jesuit missionaries in Huronia on the shores of Georgian Bay, arriving in 1626. He was a large man, very strong, yet gentle in character. He worked throughout Huronia for 20 years, becoming a master of the native languages and learning the local native customs and practices, so as to develop the best approach to teaching them about Christ. He established mission outposts and taught the Jesuit newcomers the native languages so that they too could teach the Word. He is credited with writing the first dictionary of the Huron language. While respectful of the mighty “Echon” (meaning ‘he who carries heavy load’), the most powerful of the Black Robes (a term referring to Fr. de Brébeuf’s daily dress), the Hurons were a superstitious people. They allowed only their dying children and infirmed adults to be baptized. In 1640, when they had suffered from drought and illness for several years, they decided it must be because of the Black Robes, and they began to harass the missions and the missionaries. As a young priest, Fr. de Brébeuf had made a vow never to refuse the offer of martyrdom if asked to die for Christ. By 1649, the possibility of martyrdom was ever more present. Although now an important ally of the Hurons and known as the “Apostle of the Hurons,” he and fellow Jesuit, Gabriel Lalemant, were captured by the warring Mohawk, bound to a cross and tortured for hours. With incredible courage, he continued to encourage the Christian Hurons who were suffering with him to endure the pain in return for everlasting Heaven. He was martyred on March 16, 1649 at St. Ignace at the age of 56. On June 21, 1925, Pope Pius XI beatified Fr. Jean de Brébeuf. His canonization took place on June 29, 1930 and his feast is celebrated on October 19 in the United States and September 26 in Canada.



Isaac Jogues, S.J. was born January 10, 1607 in France. He was 29 when he set out for Canada and the missions of Huronia, and he had been a priest for just seven months. Fr. Jogues arrived in Huronia in 1636 and spent three years serving mission outposts, instructing and baptizing. He lived with the Hurons in Sainte-Marie, a flourishing village. Though happy and successful in Sainte-Marie, he desired more of a challenge, and prayed that he could have the opportunity to undergo any hardship so as to implant faith in the native people of Huronia. Fr. Jogues’ prayers were answered. The Iroquois Nation was again at war with the French and on a journey from Quebec City in 1642, he was captured by the Mohawk tribe, brutally tortured and made a slave. He lived with the Mohawks for 13 months, during which time he ministered to the Christian Hurons who had been captured with him. Fr. Jogues returned to France a hero and was referred to as the “living martyr”. Given dispensation by Pope Urban VII, Isaac was able to say Mass in spite of his mutilated hands. His stay in France was not long as he yearned for missionary work. He returned to Canada the very next year, sent by the French government to discuss a peace treaty with the Indian nations. The members of the Mohawk tribe to whom he had been a slave were surprised to see Fr. Jogues now dressed as an ambassador of a powerful nation. He was successful at getting many of the warring Indian tribes to sign peace treaties with France and he wanted to go back to the Mohawks as a missionary. However, by 1646, the Mohawks were on the war path again and while journeying through Indian land, he was captured and cruelly beaten. A tomahawk blow to the head killed him on October 18, at the age of 39. On June 21, 1925, Pope Pius XI beatified Fr. Isaac Jogues. His canonization took place on June 29, 1930 and his feast is celebrated on October 19 in the United States and on September 26 in Canada. Saint Isaac is also known as the patron saint of diplomats, having returned to the Mohawk people on a mission of peace.

Noël Chabanel, S. J. was born on February 2, 1613 in the south of France to an affluent family. He became a Jesuit at the age of 17, and a priest at 28. He was a successful professor in France. With a strong desire to experience the missionary way of life, Fr. Chabanel traveled to the Canadian missions in 1643. After a year in the safety of Quebec, away from the raging Mohawk warriors, he joined Fr. de Brébeuf and colleagues and travelled out to the missions of Huronia. His enthusiasm quickly faded when he was not able to master the language and didn't care for the surroundings and customs of the Indians with whom he lived and worked. He made reference to his time in Huronia as "bloodless martyrdom". Though Fr. Chabanel was urged by his superiors in the missions to return to France, he bound himself to a vow to stay in Huronia until death. Fr. Chabanel was the last of the Canadian martyrs to meet his death. He was slain by a Huron on December 8, 1649, near the village of Ste. Marie. He was 36 years old. He was the only martyr killed by one of the Hurons who had worked with the Jesuits in Canada. On June 21, 1925, Pope Pius XI beatified Fr. Noël Chabanel. His canonization took place on June 29, 1930 and his feast is celebrated on October 19 in the United States and on September 26 in Canada.

Glorious Queen of Martyrs, to whom the early missionaries of this country were so devoted and from whom they received so many favours, graciously listen to my petition. Ask your Divine Son to remember all they did for his glory. Remind him that they preached the Gospel and made his holy name known to thousands who had never heard of him, and then for him had their apostolic labours crowned by shedding their blood. Exercise your motherly influence as you did at Cana, and implore him to grant me what I ask in this prayer, if it be according to his holy will. Amen.

O God, who by the preaching and the blood of your blessed Martyrs, John and Isaac and their companions, consecrated the first fruits of the faith in the vast regions of North America, graciously grant that by their intercession the flourishing harvest of Christians may be everywhere and always increased. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. John de Brebeuf, pray for us.

St. Isaac Jogues, pray for us.

St. Gabriel Lalemant, pray for us.

St. Anthony Daniel, pray for us.

St. Charles Gamier, pray for us.

St. Noel Chabanel, pray for us.

St. Rene Goupil, pray for us.

St. John de la Lande, pray for us.

Holy Mary, Queen of Martyrs, pray for us.

In Christ,

Fr. Waldemar Pallon S.J.



"Lord, to whom can we go?
You have the words of
eternal life."

- John 6.68

CHRIST IS EVERYTHING FOR US