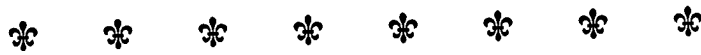


Martyrs of New France



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Introduction

There has been a steady stream of martyrs in the history of christianity. By definition, they bear *witness* to the overwhelming fact of God and His enduring presence among men. They have been uniformly men and women of an intense christian faith which has expressed itself in a dynamic love of God and one's fellow man.

The Second Vatican Council tells us that "by martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his Master, who freely accepted death on behalf of the world's salvation; he perfects that image even to the shedding of blood."

Martyrdom, of course, has something to do with being put to death out of disdain or hatred for the christian faith. But, more so, does it flow out of the thrust of love – love of God, love of one's neighbor, love linked mysteriously with the suffering of the cross. We may be prone at times to dwell overly on the external manifestations of martyrdom, on the physical sufferings which often have been extraordinary enough. But we must see the essence of martyrdom as, above all, an expression of deep love.

A martyr's death, then, draws its profound significance from these words of Christ: "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends" (Jo. 15:13).

We can also reflect on those other solemn and moving words of Christ and all that they imply: "Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (Jo. 12:24-25). The christian tradition has always seen in the blood of martyrs the seed of Christians.

In the 17th century there were in the New World eight men, six Jesuit priests and two Jesuit *donnés*, or lay apostles, who died the death of martyrs. We refer to them sometimes as the Canadian Mar-

tyrs; at other times, as the North American Martyrs or the Martyrs of New France.

The lives and deaths of these men are inextricably woven into the fabric of Canada's early history. They remind us that the beginnings of New France possess an added dimension of goodness and heroic virtue. Old Huronia and Ossernenon will forever proclaim the mighty deeds of Jean de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues and their companions.

In telling their stories here, we necessarily leave much unsaid, either because we must be selective or because history has preserved for us less details than we would desire. However, these stories, briefly told as they are, speak for themselves. They recapture for us unforgettable moments of our past that can be ignored only at the risk of losing historical perspective. The deeper meaning of life and history is surely at stake!

Chronology of Martyrdom

- 1593 March 25, birth of Jean de Brébeuf at Condé-sur-Vire, Lower Normandy.
- 1601 May 27, birth of Antoine Daniel in Dieppe.
- 1606 May 25, birth of Charles Garnier in Paris.
- 1607 January 10, birth of Isaac Jogues in Orleans.
- 1608 May 15, birth of René Goupil in the village of Saint-Martin in the diocese of Angers.
July 3, the founding of Quebec by Samuel de Champlain.
- 1610 October 31, birth of Gabriel Lalemant in Paris.
- 1613 February 2, birth of Noël Chabanel in the diocese of Mende.
- 1625 June 19, the first Jesuits arrive at Quebec; Brébeuf the future martyr, one of the five.
- 1626 July 25, Brébeuf leaves for Huronia.
- 1629 Early June, return of Brébeuf to Quebec and the capitulation of Quebec to the Kirke brothers.
- 1632 By the treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France regains possession of New France.
August 28, Paul le Jeune completes the first *Jesuit Relation*.
- 1634 August 5, arrival of Brébeuf, for the second time, in Huronia; Daniel arrives a few days later.
- 1635 December 25, the death of Champlain, good friend of the Hurons and the missionaries.
- 1636 August 13, arrival of Garnier in Huronia.
September, arrival of Jogues in Huronia.
- 1638 Jérôme Lalemant named superior of the Huron mission.
- 1639 Late summer, a start made on the construction of Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, the central mission station.

- 1641 September, Jogues and Father Charles Raymbaut paddle to the village of the Indians of the Sault (modern Sault Ste. Marie).
- 1642 August 2, capture by the Iroquois of Isaac Jogues and René Goupil.
September 29, martyrdom of Goupil at Ossernenon (near modern Auriesville), New York.
- 1643 August 18, Jogues, with the connivance of the Dutch, escapes from the hands of the Mohawks.
- 1644 September, arrival of Noël Chabanel in Huronia.
- 1645 Jérôme Lalemant becomes superior of the Jesuits at Quebec; Paul Ragueneau replaces Lalemant as superior of the Huron mission.
- 1646 October 18-19, Jogues and Jean de la Lande, a young *donné*, taken prisoner by the Iroquois and martyred at Ossernenon.
- 1647 18 Jesuits on the Huron mission.
- 1648 July 4, the fall of the Huron village of Teanaostiaïë and the martyrdom of Daniel.
August, arrival in Huronia of Gabriel Lalemant, nephew of the Jesuit superior Jérôme.
- 1649 The collapse of old Huronia.
March 16, heroic suffering and death of Brébeuf at St. Ignace.
March 17, the martyrdom of Gabriel Lalemant, also at St. Ignace.
May 15, the abandonment and deliberate destruction of Sainte-Marie by the Jesuits themselves; the gathering of the fugitive Hurons and French on Christian Island in Georgian Bay.
December 7, destruction by the Iroquois of the Tobacco village of St. Jean or Etharita and the martyrdom there of Garnier.
December 8, the death of Chabanel at the hands of a renegade Huron on the banks of the Nottawasaga river.
- 1650 June, the total withdrawal from Huronia and the end of that mission; the bones of Brébeuf, Lalemant and Garnier taken to Quebec as precious relics.
- 1930 June 29, at St. Peter's in Rome, the proclamation by Pope Pius XI of the canonization of the eight martyrs of New France: Goupil, Jogues, de la Lande, Daniel, Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Garnier and Chabanel.
- 1940 October 16, Brébeuf, Jogues and companions named by Pius XII patrons of Canada.

1

René Goupil/1608·1642

by ISAAC JOGUES

René Goupil was born in the village of Saint-Martin, in the diocese of Angers, mid May 1608. Forced to leave the Jesuit novitiate in Paris, after a few months, because of deafness and poor health, he eagerly accepted the challenge of serving the Jesuits as a donné, or lay apostle, in New France.

He arrived at Quebec in 1640 and spent the next two years in humble domestic employment and in tending the sick, both French and Indian.

Father Vimont, the Jesuit superior, referred to him as a gallant surgeon "who had dedicated his life, his heart, and his hand to the service of the poor Indians." All who had occasion to experience his charity remembered it long afterwards.

The rest – and the best – of his story has been told so well by his companion in suffering, Isaac Jogues, like René, a saint and a martyr.

JOGUES' NARRATIVE (*sent to Jérôme Lalemant, the Jesuit superior at Quebec, early May 1646*)

René Goupil was from Angers. As a young man, having expressed a strong desire to enter the Jesuit novitiate in Paris, he spent several months there, much to the edification of all. However, his physical infirmities obliged him to abandon this vocation to the religious life.

But the idea of consecrating himself to the service of God remained with him, and, when he had recovered somewhat from his indispositions, he sailed off to New France to serve there the Society which he was unable to serve in old France.

In order to avoid doing anything out of self interest, although he was perfectly free to act as he pleased, he put himself completely into the hands of the Jesuit superior. The Father applied him for two years to the menial chores of the house, and these lowly offices René fulfilled with much humility and charity.

He was also charged with caring for the sick and wounded at the

hospital, a service, because of his natural aptitude for surgery, he rendered expertly as well as with loving care. For him it was a question of seeing our Lord in each patient. And thus he left a sweet odor of goodness and of other virtues in that place where his memory is still held in veneration.

ASSIGNED TO HURONIA

When we came down from Huronia in July 1642, we begged Father Vimont to allow René to return with us. Our Hurons were badly in need of a surgeon. Father Vimont granted this request.

One cannot imagine the joy of this young man when Father Vimont told him to prepare for the voyage. Nevertheless, he was fully aware of the dangers to be met along the St. Lawrence, and he knew too the great hatred of the Iroquois for the French. All this, however, once the will of God for him had been declared, could not dissuade him from setting out for Three Rivers.

We left Three Rivers on August 1st, the day after the feast of Blessed Ignatius Loyola. On the 2nd, we met the enemy. Split up into two bands, they were waiting for us possessed of all the advantages that a large cohesive group fighting on land had over a small non-descript group caught on the water in an array of bark canoes.

IROQUOIS AMBUSH

Nearly all the Hurons fled into the woods, and we, being left behind, were taken prisoner. It was then that René's true worth shone forth. As soon as he was seized, he said to me: "Father, may God be praised; He has allowed this, He has wished it. May His holy will be done: I love it, I will it, I cherish and embrace it with all my heart."

While the enemy were pursuing those who had fled, I heard his confession and gave him absolution, not knowing what the future could have in store for us. When the enemy returned from the hunt, they flung themselves upon us like wild dogs with gaping jaws, tearing out our finger nails and crushing our fingers. René bore all this with much patience and courage.

His presence of mind amid such distress showed itself in the way he helped me, despite his painful wounds, instruct as best he could those Hurons who were not Christians.

While I was instructing them separately and as I chanced upon them, he drew my attention to a poor old Huron, called Ondouterraon, indicating to me that he could well be one of those to be killed on the spot, since the Iroquois were wont to sacrifice some life at the height

of their rage. So I quietly instructed this Huron while the enemy busied themselves with the distribution of the booty from the twelve canoes, some of which were laden with the goods destined for our Fathers in Huronia. Having shared the booty the Iroquois killed this poor old man just shortly after I had given him new life in the waters of baptism.

THE ROAD TO CAPTIVITY

We had the consolation en route of being together, and so I was witness to his many virtues.

On the way, he was always caught up in God. His words and various conversations reflected submission to the will of divine Providence and a ready acceptance of the death God would send. He gave himself up to God as a holocaust, ready to be reduced to ashes by the fires of the Iroquois which the hand of this good Father would ignite. He sought out every means to please God in everything and everywhere.

One day, after our capture and while we were en route to Mohawk country, he said to me: "Father, God has always given me an intense desire of consecrating myself to His service by religious vows in the Society of Jesus. Heretofore my sins have always rendered me unworthy of this grace. Nevertheless I hope that our Lord will find acceptable the offering which I wish to make to Him now by pronouncing, as best I can, the vows of the Society, in the presence of my God and before you." I readily assented, and he pronounced his vows with much devotion.

Badly wounded though he was, he cared for the other wounded, both the enemy who had been hurt in the fight and his fellow prisoners. He bled an ailing Iroquois with as much charity as he would have shown to the dearest of friends.

His humility and the obedience he yielded to his captors confounded me. The Iroquois who were conducting both of us in the same canoe bade me take up a paddle and ply it. I simply refused, being haughty and proud even in the face of death. A little later, they asked René the same thing, and he, without demur, began paddling, and, since these Indians because of his example tried to pressure me to do the same, he, noticing this, begged my pardon.

During the trip I raised with him several times the possibility of his escape. The freedom we were allowed presented more than one occasion. I, for my part, could not leave the French and the twenty-four or twenty-five Huron prisoners. However, he never accepted the offer, preferring to leave everything to the will of our Lord who did not at all suggest that he flee.

TORTURE UPON TORTURE

On Lake Champlain we met two hundred Iroquois who came to the Richelieu when we began building the fort there. These overwhelmed us with blows, soaked us in our blood, and made us feel the wrath of men possessed by the devil. René bore all these outrages and cruelties with great patience and charity towards those who were maltreating him.

Upon our arrival in the first village where we were treated with so much cruelty, he demonstrated a patience and a gentleness simply extraordinary. Having fallen under a hailstorm of blows heaped upon us with clubs and iron rods and not being able to get up he was carried half-dead to the scaffold where we had been placed in the middle of the village. But he was in such a piteous state that he would have moved even cruelty itself to compassion. His body was livid with bruises so that one could see in his face only the white of his eyes. Yet, for all that, he appeared the more beautiful in the eyes of the angels as he was more disfigured and like him of whom it is said: "We gazed upon him as on a leper . . . there was in him neither comeliness nor beauty" (Is. 53:4&2).

Scarcely had he, like us, got back his breath, when he was struck with three huge blows from a club, just as they had treated us earlier. After they had seized me as being the most prominent and had cut off my thumb, they turned on him and cut off his right thumb at the first joint, while he kept murmuring: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph."

For the six days we were exposed to all and sundry who wished to make sport of us, he showed forth an admirable gentleness. His chest was all burned by the hot coals and ashes which the young boys threw on our bodies during the night while we were fastened to the ground. Being by nature more agile than he I managed to avoid a number of these sufferings.

THE THREAT OF DEATH

After they had spared our lives when just a little earlier they had told us to get ready to die, René fell sick and developed a great aversion to everything and, in particular, to the food to which he was not accustomed. It is then that such words as these of Ovid apply: "Non cibus utilis aegro" (the sick man needs no food).

I could not comfort him, being myself quite ill and having none of my fingers in decent shape.

But now let me hurry on to speak of his death which lacked nothing to make it that of a martyr.

After being six weeks in that country, now that confusion reigned in the council of the Iroquois some of whom were for sending us back, we lost hope – not that I ever had much – of seeing again Three Rivers that year. Accordingly, we comforted each other by leaving all to God's will and we prepared ourselves for anything He might demand of us.

René did not fully comprehend the extent of the danger that faced us; I realized it better than he. And so I was often prompted to warn him that we should hold ourselves in readiness.

One day, while weighed down with our troubles, we had gone outside the village to pray more conveniently and with less distraction. Two young men came after us to say that we should return to the house. I had some premonition of what was going to happen and said to René: "My dear brother, let us commend ourselves to our Lord and our good mother the Virgin Mary. These fellows, I believe, are up to no good."

We had offered ourselves to our Lord a little earlier with much feeling, begging Him to accept our lives and our blood and to unite them to His own life and blood for the salvation of these poor people.

FELLED BY A TOMAHAWK

And so we turned back towards the village, reciting our rosary of which we had already said four decades. When we had stopped near the village gate to see what they would say to us, one of the Iroquois drew out a hatchet he had been hiding under a cover and struck René who was in front of him a blow on the head. René fell face down on the ground, uttering the holy name of Jesus (often we had encouraged each other to conclude our speech and our life with this holy name). At the blow, I turned and saw the bloodied hatchet and I knelt fully expecting a similar blow which would link me with my dear companion. But, since they held back, I got up and ran to the dying René who was quite near and whom they struck twice more on the head to finish him off – but not before I had given him absolution which in our captivity I had been giving him regularly after his confession every other day.

It was on the 29th of September, the feast of St. Michael, that this angel of innocence and martyr of Jesus Christ gave his life for Him who had given him His.

They then ordered me to return to my cabin where I awaited the rest of that day and the following day a similar fate. Indeed it was the belief of all around me that death would not be deferred for me now that those Iroquois had begun killing. And, to be sure, on several days they

came to kill me, but our Lord did not allow it in different ways too long for me to explain.

ATTEMPTS AT BURIAL

The following morning, I could not restrain myself from going out to determine where they had thrown his blessed body, for I wished to bury it no matter what the cost. A few Iroquois who were anxious to save my life said to me: "You have no sense. You see that they are looking for you everywhere to kill you, and you still go out! You want to go and look for a half-corrupted body which they have dragged far from here. Do you not see these young men going out who will kill you if they catch you outside the palisade?"

But this did not stop me. Our Lord gave me enough courage to be willing to die in this office of charity. I went out, I searched, and, with the help of an Algonkin, captured long ago and now a true Iroquois, I found the body.

After René had been killed, the children had stripped the body and dragged it by a cord attached to its neck to a stream which flows below their village. The dogs had already gnawed a part of his sides. I could not hold back my tears at the sight of him. I took the body and helped by my Algonkin I placed it beneath the water and weighted it down with stones so as to conceal it. I planned to return the next day with a spade when there would be no one around so as to dig a trench and bury him. I believed that the body was well hidden, but perhaps someone saw us, especially some youngster, and pulled it out.

The following day, when they were looking for me so as to kill me, my "aunt" sent me out to the field to escape their notice, so I believe. This forced me to put off the burial till the next day, and that night it rained so heavily that the stream filled up in extraordinary fashion.

The better to hide my intentions, I borrowed a spade from another cabin, but, when I reached the spot, there was no trace of the blessed remains. I went into the cold water and walked up and down, feeling with my foot to see if the stream had not lifted and dragged the body a bit – but to no avail.

How many tears did I shed, tears which fell into that rushing water, and I sang, as best I could, the psalms which the Church chants for the dead.

At length, after I had found nothing, a woman known to me passed by and saw me in distress. When I asked her if she knew what they had done with the body, she told me that they had dragged it to a river unknown to me about a mile distant.

FINAL OBSEQUIES

The woman's story proved untrue. The young people pulled the body out of the water and had dragged it into a little wood nearby. All that autumn and winter it became food for dog, crow and fox. In the spring, when I learned that they had dragged it there, I went to the wood several times but without finding the body. On the fourth trip I discovered the head and some half-eaten bones which I buried with the intention of taking them with me if the Iroquois would return me to Three Rivers, a thing they spoke of doing. I kissed these remains reverently several times since they were the bones of a martyr of Jesus Christ.

TRULY A MARTYR

I gave René this title of martyr, not only because he had been killed by enemies of God and His Church, and also while engaged in obvious charity on behalf of his neighbor, placing himself in evident danger for the love of God; but, especially, because he had been killed for his prayers and the sign of the cross.

He had been living in a cabin where he had nearly always openly said his prayers. This did not please at all a superstitious old Iroquois who was there. One day, on seeing a little child of four years of age in the cabin, in an excess of devotion and love and with a simplicity we others – more wise in the ways of the flesh than he! – would not have practised, he removed his head covering, placed it on the child's head and made a large sign of the cross over his body.

The old Iroquois, seeing this, ordered a young Iroquois in the cabin who was on the point of going on the warpath to kill René. And the young man did just that, as we have explained.

The mother herself of this child, on a trip that I made in her company, told me that it was because of the sign of the cross that René had been killed. And the old Iroquois who had given the order for his death, one day when he had called me into his cabin, said to me when he saw me blessing myself before eating: "There you have exactly what we hate! Now you know why they killed your companion and why they will kill you. Our neighbors the Dutch do not make this sign."

Sometimes too when I prayed on my knees, during a hunting expedition, they told me that they detested this way of acting, and that this was why they had killed the other Frenchman, and why they would kill me too when I got back to the village.

I beg your Reverence's pardon for the haste with which I have composed this account and for any lack of respect I may have been guilty

of. Please excuse me. I was afraid I would miss the opportunity of
acquitting myself of a duty which I should have attended to long ere
now. ❀

ISAAC JOGUES

2

Isaac Jogues/1607·1646

by ANGUS MACDOUGALL

Even among martyrs Isaac Jogues is somewhat unique, for he underwent one long drawn-out martyrdom years before he actually met his death from the blow of a tomahawk. In a sense, we could say that Jogues' martyrdom lasted from 1642 to 1646. This is why the story of his life is such a moving and memorable one.

The true greatness of Jogues emerged only under the stress of capture and incredible suffering. It was as if his brethren had never really known the depth of his faith and love until these were literally tested in the fire of Iroquois torture and captivity. That occurred in 1642 when Jogues was taken prisoner near modern Sorel on the St. Lawrence.

THE MAN FROM ORLEANS

Isaac Jogues, born in Orleans, January 10, 1607, was the fifth of nine children. From the age of ten he attended Jesuit schools, and, when he was seventeen, decided to become a Jesuit. Once accepted, he entered the Jesuit novitiate at Rouen and had the privilege of being directed by Father Louis Lalemant, a master of the religious and spiritual life and a relative of the three Lalemants who served the mission of New France.

After two years of novitiate Jogues pursued his studies at the College of La Flèche and then, in 1629, began to teach the humanities to young French boys at Rouen. He was a successful teacher, for he was a gifted humanist himself with a remarkable grasp of language and expression. Four years later he turned to the study of theology at Clermont in Paris, and, after three years, he was ordained a priest in the chapel at Clermont.

This was 1636, and Jogues was deemed ready for missionary work in New France, an apostolate he had yearned for.

His Jesuit brethren had launched the mission in New France in 1625

while Jogues was still a novice. In 1626, they had sent the famous Jean de Brébeuf to open up another mission among the Hurons, 900 miles inland. This was a very difficult and demanding apostolate, yet Jogues aspired to it.

Of Jogues' early years as a Jesuit, Father Jacques Buteux, a friend, said: "he was loved by Ours as being most gentle and as being very observant of our way of life."

The young Jesuit priest sailed from Dieppe, April 8, 1636 and eight weeks later his ship dropped anchor in the Baie des Chaleurs. He reached Quebec only several weeks later on July 2nd.

Paul le Jeune, the superior at Quebec, noted in the *Relation* for 1636, written that August, "On the second of the same month (July) Father Jogues and Father du Marché came to add to our great joy, which we felt all the more deeply, as our Lord had brought them to us in good health."

UP TO HURONIA

In a letter to his mother, dated August 20, 1636 and sent from Three Rivers, Jogues described his arrival, state of health and initial impressions. He also added a brief but significant postscript: "I have just received orders to get ready to go to the mission of the Hurons in two or three days."

On August 24th, Jogues embarked in a canoe with five Hurons who had come to trade and were now returning to the upper country. It would be quite a trip for a new missionary unfamiliar with the Huron language. Indeed, this first trip up must have been one of the memorable events in the lives of all the blackrobes and any others who eventually voyaged to the land of the Hurons. Jogues has left us some of his impressions of the trip.

He mentioned that their only food for the journey was Indian corn, crushed between two stones and boiled in water without any seasoning whatever; that sleep overcame them perched on high cliffs bordering the Ottawa river, out in the open and under the gaze of the moon; the awkwardness of travelling in a crowded canoe, unable to change position or relieve cramped muscles; the enforced silence because one could not speak a word of Huron; and the strange and brusque ways of one's Indian companions.

There were also the interminable portages around rapids and waterfalls so plentiful on the Ottawa river. And yet, despite all the usual hazards of the trip, Jogues' group made excellent time. They took only nineteen days to cover a distance that normally took twenty-five to

thirty. Jogues disembarked from his canoe at Ihonatiria on September 11th.

1636–1642

After an early bout of sickness that nearly killed him, Jogues applied himself to learning the Huron language and then did his missionary apprenticeship under older Jesuits like Brébeuf and Le Mercier. Called by the Hurons “Ondessonk” (bird of prey) he labored mainly among the Tobacco Indians, the friendly neighbors of the Hurons to the west, and later in and around Sainte-Marie, the important centre of the whole mission begun under Jérôme Lalemant’s direction in 1639.

The apostolate with Charles Garnier among the Tobacco Indians was, in human terms, a completely unrewarding one. Despite all their good will, generosity and patience, they encountered nothing except hostility and minor persecution. The Tobaccos, victims of infectious diseases, blamed the blackrobes and shrank from them as from death itself. As Jérôme Lalemant remarked so well, “These missionaries see themselves the abomination of those whose salvation they seek, at the peril of their own lives.”

After Jogues left the Tobacco country, he ministered to the Hurons around Sainte-Marie. He also directed some of the new building at the rapidly developing mission centre.

Then, in 1641, at the request of his superior Jérôme Lalemant, he joined Father Charles Raymbaut on a hurried trip to a distant Indian nation called the inhabitants of the Sault. These Indian visitors to Huronia lived mainly where modern Sault Ste. Marie stands today at the juncture of Lake Huron and Lake Superior.

The party started from Sainte-Marie about the end of September and took seventeen days to reach their destination. The missionaries were warmly welcomed. They calculated that 2,000 Indians lived in the area. From their hosts they learned that other Indian nations, who spoke neither Algonkian nor Huron, lived in good numbers to the west and northwest. The apostolic possibilities were intriguing.

The two missionaries, however, because of the lateness of the season did not linger very long at the Sault. With their Huron companions they paddled back to Sainte-Marie, arriving probably in early November.

When the following summer had restored the good weather, Jogues was assigned to make the trip to Three Rivers and Quebec. Supplies were urgently needed, and it was clear that Raymbaut, now critically ill, needed someone to accompany him on the long journey to Quebec.

They set out in the middle of June, and little did Jogues realize that

this would be the last he would see of his beloved Huronia. Dark and dramatic days lay ahead.

AMBUSH AND CAPTURE!

The trip to Quebec was made without mishap. On August 1st, Jogues' group, forty in number, laden with goods and supplies for the hard pressed mission, left on the return trip to Huronia. They did not get very far. On the following day they were ambushed by the waiting Iroquois. Most of the Hurons fled, a few were killed or captured, and Jogues and two *donnés* René Goupil and Guillaume Couture were taken prisoner. Among the captured Hurons was Ahatsistari, the greatest of their warriors, and several other prominent Christians. What a blow to the Huron mission!

As soon as the engagement was over, the nightmare of torture began. The enemy fell upon their captives in a great rage, ripping out their finger nails, chewing their fingers and beating them with clubs. They then hustled off their victims to Mohawk country south of the St. Lawrence. En route the poor captives were "caressed" by 200 Iroquois setting out on the warpath. All, except a few small children, were savagely beaten and mutilated.

And yet there was still so much more to come.

On the 18th day, weak from lack of food, loss of blood and the agonizing pain of their bruised, broken and mutilated members, the prisoners arrived in the first Iroquois village. Here again the same ordeal had to be faced: running the gauntlet, beating, cutting, whipping, burning, scratching. It was an incredible experience to be undergone again in two other villages. One wonders how the captives could survive such brutal and inhuman treatment.

Jogues seemed to be singled out for the refinement of this cruelty since the Iroquois considered him a kind of leader. They hacked off his left thumb; and yet he was grateful they had spared the right thumb so he could write to his brethren! He also received some terrible blows to his body, especially with a big lump of iron attached to a rope, and, as he said, "the only thing that kept me from fainting and that sustained my strength and courage was the fear that my tormentor would hit me with it a second time."

And even at night there was no respite for the poor victims. It was then the turn of the adolescents and children who delighted in throwing hot coals and burning cinders on their tortured flesh, in tearing open their wounds and in inflicting other senseless barbarities. And as Jogues himself remarked, "patience was our physician."

Although the Iroquois had vowed to end their lives by fire, a deliberation of the elders decided on sparing the lives of the French and of all the Hurons except three – Ahatsistari, Paul Ononhoraton and Étienne Totiri. These were burned alive in the Mohawk villages.

THE PRISONER

On September 7th, a leading member of the neighboring Dutch colony came with two others to arrange for the freedom of the French captives. Although the Dutch offered a handsome ransom, the Iroquois flatly refused to surrender Jogues, Goupil and Couture.

The days of captivity slipped by, but always the threat of death lay over the heads of Jogues and Goupil now separated from Couture. Mohawk hotheads longed to finish them off. Finally on September 29th, Jogues and Goupil, out for a walk and some seclusion, were intercepted by two young Iroquois just outside of the village of Ossernenon. Sensing something sinister, both commended themselves to God's mercy. As they entered the village the young men struck Goupil with their hatchets and killed him. Jogues, fully expecting the worst for himself, knelt for a death blow that never came. He was left to mourn the death of this valiant Christian to whom he had become so attached.

Autumn gave way to winter and Jogues, treated like a slave, somehow or other eked out a miserable existence among this inhospitable throng. No one seemed to care about him. However, about mid winter, living conditions improved slightly, and some of the elders even listened for a time to his teaching about christianity. Having thus gained a measure of freedom, he visited the sick, comforted captive Hurons and even succeeded in baptizing some dying Iroquois.

ESCAPE

With the arrival of summer Jogues was often taken on various fishing expeditions by his Mohawk captors. In August, 1643, the group to which he was attached had to pass through a Dutch village in order to do some trading. The Dutch commander of the settlement, Arendt van Corlaer, managed to draw him aside and urged him to take this opportunity to escape. There was a boat at anchor in the Hudson waiting to carry him downstream to safety. Jogues, only anxious to follow God's will in everything, asked for the night to pray over the decision. In his prayer he weighed all the reasons for fleeing and for staying, and he finally decided that it was God's will for him that he now escape. He had done all he could for his French companions and the christian Hurons among the Iroquois.

And so with the connivance of the Dutch, Jogues, that night, gave his Iroquois escort the slip and found a hiding place on the boat at anchor in the river. The Dutch for several days had to brave the fury of the outraged Iroquois, incensed at being robbed of their prey. It was touch and go for a while whether the Mohawks would turn on the Dutch themselves, and Jogues, aware of the commotion, was ready to give himself up. However, the Dutch rode out this storm and finally pacified the Indians with various gifts.

Once the crisis had passed and the Iroquois had moved away, the Dutch sent Jogues downstream to their main colony, that of New Amsterdam (New York). From there, after excellent hospitality, Jogues obtained passage on a Dutch vessel bound for La Rochelle, France.

Freedom was his now once again, but he bore on his body and in his countenance the unmistakable marks of incredible tortures.

BACK IN FRANCE

Jogues arrived in Lower Brittany on Christmas Day, 1643. Through the kindness of a merchant from Rennes he reached that city early in the morning of January 5, 1644, and presented himself at the Jesuit residence there, asking to see the Rector.

As we might expect, the porter, at that early hour, rather put off by his miserable and strange appearance, demurred a good deal, until finally Jogues appealed to him to say to the Rector that a poor man from Canada was asking for him. The porter thought it wise to deliver this message. The Rector who was vested to say Mass came at once to see this poor person, believing him to be someone in dire need.

The Rector welcomed the stranger with kindness and, while extending hospitality, plied him with questions about the New World and about various Jesuits there. Finally, he asked him about Father Isaac Jogues; there had been some dreadful rumors. Was he alive? or had he been put to death, or . . .? Jogues quietly answered: "He is at liberty and it is he, Reverend Father, who speaks to you."

We can well imagine the Rector's astonishment at this revelation and the consternation of the Jesuit community as the news rapidly spread. Jogues alive and right here in our house in Rennes? One can almost hear the Gallic "Impossible!" As one of these Rennes Jesuits wrote later, all the brethren regarded Jogues as a Lazarus raised from the dead.

Naturally, Jogues' presence had a profound effect on all he met. His Jesuit brethren were deeply moved at the sight of him. One recorded his impressions of the man in this fashion: "He is as cheerful as if he

had suffered nothing; and as zealous to return among the Hurons, amid all those dangers, as if perils were to him securities. He certainly expects to cross the ocean once again, in order to succor these poor people, and to finish the sacrifice already begun.”

Jogues, the living victim, created a sensation in France. Everyone from the Queen down wished to meet and talk with him. For a man so conscious of his own shortcomings and indebtedness to God, all this proved extremely mortifying. He simply longed to return to New France and his beloved Hurons. His superiors, recognizing the true situation, readily concurred in this design, and a happy Jogues sailed off to New France in that spring of 1644.

BACK TO NEW FRANCE

Strangely enough, his brethren in Canada learned of his escape from the Iroquois only when he re-appeared on the St. Lawrence that June of 1644! In those days communications left something to be desired.

Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, “mother of the Canadian Church” and good friend of Jogues, wrote to her son Claude in France to say that “God has restored to us a true living martyr.” She also mentioned that she had questioned Jogues about his experiences and was struck by his “wondrous simplicity, which shows his great saintliness.”

Although he was back in Canada, Jogues would never see the land of Huronia again. His superiors assigned him to ministry at the young colony of Montreal and employed him in various dealings with the Iroquois, at that time a bit more tractable. The French were then more hopeful of arranging some kind of lasting peace with their bitter foe and needed the services of a man like Jogues so well versed in the language and ways of these Iroquois.

In May 1646, Jogues went as an ambassador of peace to the Mohawks, his erstwhile captors. It was not a long affair and he returned to Quebec by early July.

All that summer an uneasy truce continued, but in September the French believed it necessary to make further overtures for peace, and so once again they proposed sending Jogues among the Iroquois. He, for his part, was most willing to go, even though he felt a premonition of impending death. While awaiting confirmation of his appointment he penned a few lines to a fellow Jesuit and ended with: “My heart tells me that, if I am the one to be sent on this mission, I shall go but I shall not return. But I would be happy if our Lord wished to complete the sacrifice where he began it. Farewell, dear Father. Pray that God unite me to himself inseparably.”

Jogues, accompanied by a young *donné* Jean de la Lande and a few Hurons, left Three Rivers on this embassy September 27th or 28th. At first all went smoothly. But some Iroquois they met on the way advised them that all was not well. Certain malcontents were all for breaking the truce and attacking the French. At this news all Jogues' Huron companions but one left him. Jogues, however, felt he must push on, and de la Lande stayed with him.

Whether they sensed it or not – and possibly they did – they were heading for death, but the death of martyrs.

NEWS OF JOGUES' DEATH

No news of their fate reached Quebec until June 1647. Letters from the Dutch governor Kieft and Jan Labatie, an interpreter at Fort Orange (Albany), announced the deaths of Jogues and de la Lande. Both had been beaten and tomahawked to death by certain Mohawks angry with the French and full of hate for Jogues whom they blamed for so many recent misfortunes. It was a sad but not unexpected message.

Jérôme Lalemant, in the *Relation* for 1647, refers to Jogues as a true martyr. He then paid a warm tribute to his fellow missionary. One can detect in Lalemant's words his deep appreciation and love of this heroic brother. He praises his rare humility, his strict poverty, his great purity of heart, and his love of the Cross.

Never, says Lalemant, did Jogues condone in himself the slightest aversion towards his persecutors, and, even though by nature endowed with a hasty temper, he controlled it admirably. True, he spoke out boldly when any of the Iroquois mocked the faith, but that was only because God meant everything to him and he could not brook any seeming slight to the divine majesty.

Jogues' obedience, extraordinary prayerfulness and deep attachment to the Blessed Sacrament were bywords with his fellow Jesuits. Father Buteux described him as a soul glued to the Blessed Sacrament.

Nor must we forget his remarkable sensitivity, his deep concern for others, his tormentors included, and his love so full of tenderness. All this he manifested so strikingly in his dealings with Goupil, the Hurons and the Iroquois themselves. Parkman, that begrudging admirer of the early blackrobes, was profoundly impressed by the life of Jogues. In him he saw "one of the purest examples of Roman Catholic virtue."

It is rare for any man to suffer two martyrdoms in a single lifetime. This was Jogues' holy fate. "Our Lord prolonged his life," wrote Lalemant, "that he might come and present it to him another time, as a

burnt offering, at the place where he had already begun his sacrifice.”

Jogues’ accomplishment, then, is, in a dramatic and unforgettable manner, that of any man or woman who unswervingly loves God with the whole heart and the whole mind and the whole strength, and the neighbor as oneself, even if this must lead to unspeakable suffering and death.

It would take three centuries before the Church officially recognized what Jogues’ fellow Jesuits and friends, what so many Hurons and Algonkins, and Iroquois too, simply took for granted. On June 29, 1930, at Rome, in the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, Isaac Jogues, along with Jean de Brébeuf, René Goupil, Jean de la Lande and four others of New France, was declared a martyr and saint. ❀

3

Jean de la Lande/ ? ·1646

by HORATIO PHELAN

The universal call to holiness, stressed by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, was admirably foreshadowed by the Jesuit *donnés* of 17th Century New France. They were a group of exemplary Christians who voluntarily bound themselves by contract to serve the Mission for life in whatever capacity and place the Jesuit superior might assign to them. The record shows that they rendered “invaluable services.”

Representative of this gallant band was Jean de la Lande, canonized by Pius XI in 1930. Born in the Norman seaport of Dieppe and martyred in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon – now Auriesville, N.Y. – in October 1646, he is described in the *Jesuit Relations* five times as a “young man” and once as a “young lad.” His recorded purchase of two books of devotion, once the property of Jean Nicolet, places him in the Colony in 1642. From that year till 1646, the time of his departure for Iroquois country, he appears to have been on the staff of the Jesuit residence in Three Rivers, of which Anne de Nouë was the superior.

In the hope of safeguarding the precarious peace and establishing a christian mission, Isaac Jogues, accompanied by Jean de la Lande, two or three Hurons and a Huron-Iroquois, set out from Quebec on September 24, 1646 for the Mohawk Valley. Soon after they had passed Three Rivers, all but one of the Indians left the party.

A MARTYR WITH JOGUES

Since Jogues' successful peace-making visit that same summer, there had obviously been a change of mind and attitude among the Mohawks. While still on their way to the Valley and in violation of the treaty, the two Frenchmen were captured “beaten, robbed, stripped naked and led to the next village.” At the divided council meeting in Ossernenon, the moderate Turtle and Wolf Clans prevailed and the prisoners were released. Some fanatical members of the Bear Clan, however, teacher-

ously tomahawked Jogues on October 18th and Jean de la Lande on the 18th, or perhaps more probably on the 19th.

News of the death was slow in reaching Quebec. It seems to have come from several sources. The first word seems to have been forwarded to Quebec from Three Rivers following the return of an Indian from Iroquois country on June 4, 1647. More officially, Wilhelm Kieft, the Governor of New Amsterdam, wrote Governor de Montmagny on November 14, 1646, to warn him of an imminent Iroquois attack on the French colony and to report the two murders. He enclosed a letter written by Jan Labatie, the interpreter at Fort Orange, and addressed according to Lalemant's 1647 *Relation* to Sieur Bourdon, Jogues' fellow peace commissioner on the 1646 summer visit to Mohawk country. It was dated October 30, 1646. The letters reached de Montmagny only in June 1647.

The Dutch Governor wrote that Jogues had been killed on October 18th and Jean de la Lande on October 19th. He fixed the blame squarely on the Bear Clan and exonerated the Turtle and Wolf Clans of all responsibility. He stated further that the heads of both men had been placed on the palings of the village and their bodies thrown into the river. The interpreter gave more details and described how de la Lande had been met in a clearing, stripped, threatened and killed.

Some confirmation may, perhaps, be found in Jérôme Lalemant's account, in his 1647-48 *Relation*, of the Iroquois who had voluntarily surrendered to the French near Three Rivers, claiming that after his capture by an Algonkin chief, he had been ransomed and freed by Governor de Montmagny. He further claimed that at some cost to himself he had tried in vain to save the lives of both Jogues and de la Lande.

Jean de la Lande's strong sense of commitment was clearly evidenced by his acceptance of this dangerous assignment, by continuing the journey with Jogues after they had been abandoned by their guides and by his steadfastness in the face of death. In his 1647 *Relation*, Lalemant underlines the *donné's* apostolic motivation. De la Lande, he wrote, "seeing the danger involved in this perilous journey, protested at his departure that the desire of serving God was leading him into a country where he expected to meet certain death." Bressani, in his 1653 *Relation*, singles out the *donné's* christian fortitude: "On the following day, they killed his companion, a young Frenchman, native of Dieppe in Normandy, called Jean de la Lande, who though he foresaw the same danger, had courageously exposed himself to it, hoping for no reward but Paradise."

THE DONNÉS OF NEW FRANCE

In assisting the missionaries, the *donnés* performed one or more of a wide variety of services: they hunted, fished and tilled the soil; they were masons, carpenters, tailors, cooks and doctors; they shared their dangers, hardships and fatigues; and in time of danger all were prepared to defend both men and missions by force of arms.

INTRODUCED BY LALEMANT

The *donnés* were first established in New France by Jérôme Lalemant, soon after his arrival in 1638. Their life style and form of commitment evolved gradually to meet the needs of the Mission and the judgment of superiors. Initially they were recruited for the Huron Mission but subsequently spread throughout the entire territory of the Jesuits in New France.

In a time when coadjutor brothers were few, the French Jesuit Province of Champagne had temporarily and by way of exception made use of a similar expedient. In his remarkable Memoir to Father Vitelleschi, the Jesuit General, written in 1643, Jérôme Lalemant gives reasons for the need of *donnés* in Huronia: mission personnel was restricted in number by difficulties of travel and supply as well as by the paucity of suitable and willing candidates; secular domestics, he claimed, could do all that coadjutor brothers could and more, and he instanced the bearing of arms; hence the general preference for *donnés*.

Before leaving France, Lalemant had discussed the matter with his Provincial, Étienne Binet, and obtained his approval. In addition, Father Binet accorded a large latitude to the mission fathers in fixing the nature of the relationship of the *donnés* to the Society.

In Quebec, Paul le Jeune, the Mission Superior, concurred, suggesting that if the Huron missionaries agreed, he was of the opinion that the *donnés* should take some kind of vow, following the approved Champagne experiment and because of their association with the paid employees and Indians.

FIRST DONNÉS

The Huron missionaries unanimously welcomed the new institution. After due consideration they decided that any layman, currently attached to the Mission, who wished to make a life commitment, could do so on the following terms: they would publicly take conditional vows of devotion, using a formula similar to the simple vows of the Jesuits and should renew these vows twice a year; the commitment would be accepted on behalf of the Society and the Society, in turn,

would undertake to provide for the *donné's* needs until death.

In 1639, six or seven employees of proven virtue at Sainte-Marie, as the founding group of *donnés*, committed themselves for life to the Mission. In addition to a civil contract, for those who wished to make their gift of self more complete, a form of self-donation, relieving the Society of all obligation, was prepared.

When this procedure was submitted to Father Vitelleschi, he reminded Lalemant that the Champagne experiment had been allowed by way of exception, that he disapproved of the taking of vows and wearing a religious habit by the *donnés* and of obligating the entire Society to provide for them for life. In consequence he felt constrained to instruct Lalemant to accept no more *donnés* on the stipulated conditions and to release those already received.

REVISED LIFE STYLE

This was a major blow to the Mission that could ill afford to lose the *donnés*. Jérôme Lalemant assembled his Mission consultors. The result of long and serious consideration was a modified life style for the *donnés*. They submitted the changes to Father Vitelleschi with a covering letter, signed by all six of them, J. Lalemant, C. Pijart, F. le Mercier, C. Garnier, P. Ragueneau, P. Chastelain, earnestly soliciting his approval and stressing the impossibility of replacing the *donnés* by either coadjutor brothers or paid employees. Writing three years earlier to the Superior General, Garnier had stated explicitly that without the *donnés* "this mission would collapse."

The proposed changes were: no vows or religious habit; a life long commitment without remuneration by the *donné*; acceptance of the commitment by the Superior of New France, with the obligation of providing food, clothing, shelter and care in sickness and old age; no distinction between *donnés* and paid employees and the right to dismiss any *donné* who failed to live up to his agreement.

The amended life style and covering letter were forwarded to Rome on April 2, 1643, and twenty-one months later, a favorable answer, dated December 25, 1644, was returned to the Mission. The subsequent history of the *donnés* abundantly demonstrated how right were the insistence of the missionaries and the revised judgment of Father Vitelleschi.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

The *donnés* were a remarkable group of men. Two of them, René Goupil and Jean de la Lande were canonized in 1930 together with the

six martyred Jesuit priests of North America. At least three *donnés* became Jesuit coadjutor brothers: Christophe Regnaut, François Malherbe and Jacques Largilier.

In the annual lists of the Sainte-Marie-aux-Hurons staff during its brief ten years of existence, Jones names thirty-three *donnés*, a few for the entire time, most for shorter periods. Charles Boivin, the building foreman, Christophe Regnaut and Jacques Levrier, both shoemakers and Joseph Molère, pharmacist, were on staff for ten years. Robert Le Coq, the business man, surnamed "the good," moved continuously to and from Quebec and throughout the mission territory, negotiating its business, and Jean Guérin, an unusually saintly man, were there for nine.

Striking, indeed, is the willingness and frequency with which the missionaries, moderate and well balanced men, some of them canonized saints, testify to the selfless service, personal holiness and complete loyalty of the *donnés*.

Writing to Father Vitelleschi in 1640, St. Charles Garnier said: "As to our domestics who have given themselves to us for life, we cannot sufficiently praise the divine will for having sent them to us." He describes them as "very pious, most prompt in obedience and an outstanding example to our Indians." He implies that their example helped to neutralize, in the minds of the Indians, the bad example shown by many Europeans. In another place, Garnier speaks of the "many blessings accruing to the Mission because of them . . . laymen in dress, religious in heart."

"Our Indians speak of them (*donnés*) with admiration," wrote Paul le Jeune, and when they see persons who do not wear our costume, practicing so exactly what we teach, they place a higher value on our faith; this may some day be a motive for them to embrace it."

In the *Relation* of 1641-42, St. John Brébeuf wrote: "Indeed all of our household strive towards perfection according to their ability, chiefly, of course, those who have given themselves as *donnés*."

"And what seems to me still more surprising," wrote Jérôme Lalemant, "is that, on such occasions, young men are to be found who, moved by the example of the fathers, wish to run the same risks, and protest that zeal for souls, not hope of gain, makes them undertake such long, rough and dangerous journeys."

Describing the spirit of Sainte-Marie-aux-Hurons in 1647-1648, Paul Ragueneau wrote: ". . . while the remainder are chosen persons; most of whom have resolved to live and die with us; they assist us by their labour and industry, with a courage, a faithfulness and a holiness

that assuredly are not of earth. Consequently they look to God alone for their reward, deeming themselves only too happy to pour forth not only their sweat, but, if need be, all their blood to contribute as much as they can toward the conversion of the Indians.”

Perhaps we can emphasize what Ragueneau said by only a brief reference to a *donné* who assisted the missionaries of New France from Quebec to Wisconsin for more than twenty years. Jean Guérin worked among the Iroquois, Hurons, Abenakis and Algonkians. He made his last mission journey with Father Ménard in August 1660 to what is now the state of Wisconsin, where both died. Jérôme Lalemant eulogized him at considerable length in his *Relation* for 1662-1664, from which we quote only a few words. “He was a man of God, of eminent virtue and a very ardent zeal for the saving of souls . . . showing throughout evidences of a rare holiness . . . He was preeminently a man of prayer . . . His humility was quite extraordinary.”

No one, then, can doubt the important contribution made by these *donnés* to the mission, especially in the decade of Sainte-Marie-among-the-Hurons, 1639-1649.

As we might expect, in the years that followed the demise of old Huronia, the *donnés*, as an institution, declined. A few of them we know, like Largilier, Regnaut and Malherbe, became Jesuit coadjutor brothers; many like Boucher and Couture, simply resumed a full lay life; while several, like Jean Guérin, continued to serve the missionaries in other parts of North America.

In time the *donnés* ceased as an institution in New France, although we hear of a *donné* as late as 1727. Obviously there no longer existed the same compelling reasons that had created the need and encouraged such a remarkable response in 17th century New France. ❀

4

Antoine Daniel/1601-1648

by WINSTON RYE

Father René Ménard, missionary in Huronia, recalled having heard Father Antoine Daniel say that, when he was among the Hurons, the more he saw himself abandoned and removed from human comforts, the more God took possession of his heart. This memorial is of a man who gave all that he had to preach the word of God and give witness to christian ideals among the native peoples of North America, and especially the Huron nation.

YEARS IN FRANCE

Antoine Daniel, born in the Norman sea-coast town of Dieppe on May 27, 1601, was encouraged by his parents to study law and he began to take the necessary courses. After about a year, however, he decided to enter the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), which he did on October 1, 1621 at the novitiate in Rouen.

Two years later he took his religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and was then sent by his religious superiors to teach at the Jesuit College in Rouen. It was during his last year at this college, 1626-1627, that he first came into contact with the Huron nation. A boy, named Amantacha, had been sent from New France to be educated in the mother country. There the Huron was baptized with the name of Louis de Sainte Foy, and Daniel was entrusted with his instruction and education.

At the end of the school year, Antoine Daniel was sent to the College of Clermont in Paris to study theology in preparation for ordination to the priesthood. During his first year in Paris, Charles Lalemant, the first Superior of the Jesuits in Quebec, arrived and, no doubt, there was much talk among the young Jesuits at the College of Clermont about the mission field of New France. This helped to foster Antoine's desire to go to New France to preach the word of God. After three

years of studying theology, in 1630, Daniel was ordained to the priesthood.

Although he requested to be sent to the missions of New France, Father Daniel had to wait, for, in 1629, the English captured Quebec and it was not until 1632 that France regained her territory in North America. During this period, after his ordination, Father Daniel taught at the College at Eu.

NEW FRANCE

Finally, in 1632, Antoine Daniel and Father Ambroise Davost set sail for New France with Antoine's brother, Charles Daniel, a sea-captain in the charge of the De Caen Company of France representing Protestant-Huguenot interests. They arrived at St. Anne's Bay, Cape Breton, where the two Jesuits remained for a year administering to the French who had settled there.

In the spring of 1633, Daniel and Davost travelled towards Quebec with Champlain, who had stopped off at Cape Breton on his way to Quebec. Daniel arrived at Quebec on June 24th, while Davost arrived later having stopped off at Tadoussac on the way.

Although Daniel wished to set off immediately for Huronia, he did not leave that summer. The reason given in the *Relations* was that relatives of an Indian prisoner, who had killed a Frenchman, were waiting along the river route to kill the Jesuits unless the prisoner was released. For this reason, Champlain decided that the Fathers should not make the journey.

At Quebec, Daniel ministered to the French and used the time to study the Huron Indian language under the direction of Father Brébeuf. Father Le Jeune, writing to the Provincial in France in 1634, noted: "Father Daniel and Father Davost are quiet men. They have studied the Huron language thoroughly, and I have taken care that they should not be diverted from this work, which I believe to be of great importance." Brébeuf, the veteran of Huronia, praised the work of learning the language by the Jesuits and the Frenchmen destined for Huronia:

All the French who are here have eagerly applied themselves to it, reviving the ancient usage of writing on birch-bark, for want of paper. Fathers Davost and Daniel have worked at it, beyond all; they know as many words as I, and perhaps more; but they have not yet had practice in forming and joining them promptly, although Father Daniel already explains himself passably well (Thwaites, VIII, 131-133).

ON THE WAY

Having spent this year of preparation in learning the rudiments of the Huron language, Daniel was ready to begin the journey to Huronia. Once again difficulties cropped up, and it seemed as if the missionaries would be left at Three Rivers when the Hurons began the return journey. The first difficulty was that the Hurons did not arrive in large numbers at Three Rivers as expected because of an Iroquois attack on the Hurons which "caused the Hurons to come in small bands, only seven canoes coming down, at first."

The second difficulty was that the Algonquins, especially an Algonquin captain called "The Partridge," were anxious about the survival of the Jesuits on their journey to Huronia. Most important to them were the possible repercussions should any of the Jesuit Fathers meet a violent death or a natural one along the perilous water route or in the land of the Hurons. Therefore, "The Partridge" persuaded the Hurons not to take any of the Frenchmen with them on the return trip. It was only through the reassurances of Monsieur du Plessis, Commander of the Fleet, that the Hurons finally agreed to transport all the Frenchmen – both Jesuits and laymen.

No sooner had the Hurons agreed, than they backed down because of the lack of room in the small canoes and the presence of sickness among the Hurons. After more negotiations, the Hurons finally agreed to take Father Brébeuf, Father Daniel, and a young man named Le Baron, leaving behind Father Davost and five other Frenchmen, who secured transportation later.

Just as they were about to leave Three Rivers on July 7, 1634, Father Daniel noticed that the Hurons who were transporting him did not have cloaks like the others, he stepped out of the canoe and told Brébeuf about it. He then had some given to them. Brébeuf recorded the moment of departure:

At last, then, after having briefly thanked Monsieur du Plessis . . . I embarked with Father Antoine Daniel and one of our men. . . . Monsieur du Plessis honored our departure with several volleys, to recommend us still more to our Indians. It was the seventh of July (Thwaites, VIII, 75).

THE JOURNEY

The journey was very difficult. The Hurons were sick, thus Brébeuf, Daniel and Le Baron paddled all the time – from sunrise to sunset. Along the route to Allumette Island, the Hurons in his canoe decided to abandon Daniel among the Algonquins. However, a friendly Huron

captain from Ossossané took Daniel into his canoe for the rest of the journey. The news that reached Three Rivers was not encouraging either for the Jesuits there or for those who were contemplating to follow on a similar journey. A French interpreter among the Algonquin nation had brought news that Father Brébeuf was suffering greatly, that the Indians were sick, and that Father Daniel had died of starvation or was in imminent danger of dying. Father Paul le Jeune, writing to France in 1634, ends the *Relation* of that year by asking: "Who knows whether Father Daniel is still living?"

ARRIVAL IN HURONIA

At the beginning of August, Father Brébeuf landed at Toanché I. A few days later Father Antoine Daniel arrived, followed by Father Davost, who eventually did acquire transportation from the Hurons out of Three Rivers. After settling for a while at Toanché II, which was not far from Toanché I, the Jesuits made their home at Ihonatiria, or St. Joseph I. At St. Joseph, Daniel met an old friend, Amantacha or Louis de Sainte Foy, the Huron boy he had instructed in France at the College of Rouen. Upon his return to New France the Huron lad had rejected not only the French culture but also the faith into which he had been baptized. This was a great disappointment to Daniel.

WORK IN HURONIA

From the village of St. Joseph, the Jesuits would go out to teach and instruct the Hurons in the surrounding villages. The instruction included the Our Father, which Daniel had translated into the Huron language for this purpose. There was a difficulty, however, of translating prayers into the Huron tongue; for example, Brébeuf writes:

we find ourselves hindered from getting them to say properly in their language, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Would you judge it fitting, while waiting for a better expression to substitute instead, In the name of our Father, and of his Son, and of their Holy Spirit? (Thwaites, X, 119).

Most of the instruction was given during the winter months when the Hurons were in their long-houses. During the summer months, since the Hurons were busy farming and trading, the Jesuit Fathers made the Spiritual Exercises or their annual eight days of silent prayer, for as Brébeuf observes: "We had the more need of these exercises, as the high duties we are called upon to perform need more union with God, and because we are compelled to live in a continual bustle." Also

during the summer months the Jesuits worked on a Huron dictionary and grammar. For two years Daniel labored at St. Joseph I among the Hurons who called him "Antwen," which seems to be a corruption of his christian name of Antoine.

A NEW VENTURE

Although the experiment of bringing a Huron boy to France for education and his reception into the christian community had not seemed to be successful, the Jesuits still thought that the road to christianizing the Huron nation was through the young. So they began to plan for a Seminary or school for Huron boys at Quebec.

After long negotiations twelve Huron boys were to make the journey to Quebec as the first group for the Seminary. Fathers Daniel and Davost were assigned to accompany them as well as to begin the new school. The day for the departure was fixed for July 22, 1636. When it came time to leave, many of the parents could not bear to part with their children, so only three Huron boys made the journey.

TOWARDS QUEBEC

The journey went extremely well at the beginning in comparison with the one that both Daniel and Davost had made to Huronia. Along the route, about three days before arriving at Allumette Island, they saw Fathers Garnier and Chastelain on their way to Huronia. Daniel, seeing that these Fathers were well treated, was so delighted that he "gave the Indians some of the weed which we detest and which they adore – tobacco."

For a second time, Allumette Island was a focal point of difficulty in the journey. The Algonquins did not want the Hurons to pass and use the Ottawa River. Daniel sent a letter to Le Jeune explaining the difficulty:

I am held here at the Island of the Allumettes. The Indians will not let us pass, because Chief Le Borgne is dead and his relatives have not been covered. You know what that means. Their grief has not been assuaged by rich presents. We cannot satisfy them and though they are willing to let the French go down the river, they are detaining the Hurons, but I told them I would not go without my Indians. (O'Brien, p. 145).

It seems that there was more at stake than the grief of relatives. The Algonquins were becoming very jealous of the trade between the Hurons and the French. After lengthy negotiations the Hurons were allowed to pass, and the journey resumed towards Three Rivers.

Le Jeune's *Relation* of 1636 describes the arrival at Three Rivers:

On the nineteenth of the same month of August a part of the main body of the Hurons arrived. As soon as we saw their canoes appear upon the great River, we descended from the Fort to receive Father Daniel and Father Davost, and a few of our French, whom we were expecting; Monsieur the Commandant himself was there. Father Daniel was in this first company, Father Davost in the rear guard, which did not yet appear; and we even began to doubt whether the Island Indians had not made them return. At the sight of Father Daniel, our hearts melted; his face was bright and happy, but greatly emaciated; he was barefooted, had a paddle in his hand, and was clad in a wretched cassock, his Breviary suspended from his neck, his shirt rotting on his back. He saluted our Captains and our French people; then we embraced him, and, having led him to our little room, after having blessed and adored our Lord, he related to us in what condition was the cause of christianity among the Hurons, delivering to me the Letters and the *Relations* sent from that Country, which constrained us to sing a *Te Deum*, as a thanksgiving for the blessings that God was pouring out upon this New Church.

After staying a few days at Three Rivers, Daniel and the Huron boys made their way to Quebec, about a two days journey. At Quebec, after the usual acknowledgements of the Governor, they made their way to Notre-Dame-des-Anges. By this time the number of the Huron boys had increased to six, since the interpreter, Jean Nicolet, had brought three more recruits with him, arriving a few days after Daniel at Three Rivers. The Seminary at Notre-Dame-des-Anges, on the banks of the St. Charles River, about two miles from Quebec, also took in some boys from the Montagnais nation.

THE SEMINARY

Seminary life was rigorous for the boys. Beginning with prayers in the morning, Mass, and breakfast, the Indian lads were then taught reading and writing followed by a short break after which they had catechetical instruction. They set their own table for dinner, which was followed by more instruction in reading. They then "are free to go and walk, or to devote their attention to some occupation. They generally go hunting or fishing, or make bows and arrows, or clear some land in their own way, or do anything else that is agreeable to them." In the

evening, after supper, they said their prayers and retired. Helping Daniel at the Seminary were Father Anne de Nouë, Father Pierre Pijart, and, of course, Father Davost.

Just as the beginnings of the Seminary were difficult, so too was the first year, for two of the Huron boys died. Daniel was at the bedside of these two boys day and night during their illness. Both were baptized before they died.

In the following year, 1637, the Seminary was transferred to Quebec to the college that had been founded there in 1635. Father Davost went with the Indian boys and he taught both the French and the Hurons at the new site.

RETURN TO HURONIA

In 1638, Daniel began the return journey to Huronia, accompanied by a small group of French soldiers, for news in the fall of 1637 was that the Hurons had risen up against the French and had massacred the missionaries. During the journey, Daniel was sick and was abandoned for the second time by the Hurons. The Frenchmen on the journey forced the Indians to leave some corn with Daniel so he could survive. Once again he was picked up by a friendly Huron and he arrived in Huronia on July 9, 1638.

That first year back he spent at Ossossané, or La Conception, on Nottawasaga Bay. In 1639, he was transferred to the eastern part of Huronia among the Arendarhonons, who are generally considered one of the four nations of the Huron Confederacy; they were also known as the "People of the Rocks," or the Rock Nation. From 1639 to 1648, Daniel worked out of two villages: St. Jean Baptiste or Cahigué, from 1638-1647; and St. Joseph II, or Teanaostaiaë, 1647-1648. His work consisted in visiting the neighboring villages and preaching the word of God to the Hurons.

HIS DEATH

As it was customary for the Jesuits to make an annual retreat during the summer months, Antoine Daniel, in late June of 1648, went to Sainte-Marie I, which had been built as a christian centre among the Huron people and was also the first European settlement in the present day Province of Ontario. Daniel finished his retreat on July 1st, and although his Jesuit brothers tried to convince him to stay a few days to rest and relax, he left immediately for his mission station of St. Joseph II. Three days later the Iroquois attacked, captured and burnt the Indian village of St. Joseph II.

In a letter of 1649, Father Ragueneau recorded the events that had happened at St. Joseph II as they were related to him by the Hurons of that village who had survived. Father Daniel had just finished saying Mass, about sunrise, when the war cries of the Iroquois were heard. During the battle that followed, Father Daniel went about comforting the dying and baptizing many. When the Iroquois finally entered the village, the blackrobe walked towards them blocking their way in order to gain time for the Hurons who were trying to escape. Wounded by a musket-shot and pierced by many arrows he fell and died calling upon the name of Jesus. The Iroquois added new wounds to his corpse and finally threw his body into the flames of the burning church. "Thus delaying the enemy, he was serviceable to his escaping flock even after his death," for, in delaying over the body of Daniel, the Iroquois had given the needed time to the fleeing Hurons.

Father Ragueneau summarizes the life of Daniel in these words:

Antoine had just finished his fourteenth year at this Huron mission, everywhere a useful man, and assuredly raised up for the salvation of those tribes; . . . and the first man of our society to be taken from us. True, his death was sudden, but did not find him unprepared; for he had always lived that he was ever ready for death (Thwaites, XXXIII, 265). ❀

5

Jean de Brébeuf/1593-1649

by ANGUS MACDOUGALL

We know very little of the early years of Jean de Brébeuf. He was born at Condé-sur-Vire on March 25, 1593, fifteen years before the founding of Quebec by Samuel de Champlain in 1608. Brébeuf himself would see this Quebec on June 19, 1625.

At the age of twenty-four, Jean entered the Jesuit novitiate at Rouen, and ill-health seemed to dog one who later would be remembered as the most robust of the blackrobes. Such poor health shortened somewhat his course of studies and brought on an early ordination to the priesthood in February 1622. Three years later he sailed off to Canada, a land that would never forget him.

Brébeuf's initial contacts with the Indians he had come to convert to christianity were with the Algonkian Montagnais close to Quebec. In his first winter in Canada, 1625-1626, he learned something about the Algonkian language and perhaps still more about Indian ways. He was a shrewd observer and learned quickly and well.

We know that in time this affable Norman would become an expert in the Huron language and culture. He would also write long detailed reports that set him apart as Canada's first serious ethnographer.

HURONIA 1626-1629

Longing to do missionary work among the promising Hurons, he left for their country on July 25, 1626. His companions were a fellow Jesuit Anne de Nouë and a Recollet Father Joseph de la Roche Daillon. Anne de Nouë was forced to withdraw in 1627; la Roche Daillon followed suit in 1628; and Brébeuf himself was recalled by his superior to Quebec in June 1629. The occasion was the imminent capitulation of Quebec to the Kirke brothers fighting on behalf of English interests.

Brébeuf left his mission field with much knowledge of the Huron language and the Huron people but also with a heavy heart. His Huron

friends were no less downcast at his – for them – inexplicable departure.

Paul le Jeune, in his *Relation* of 1633 describes Brébeuf's break with his beloved Hurons in these terms: "When Father Brébeuf was beginning to make himself understood, the arrival of the English compelled him to leave these poor people, who said to him at his departure: 'Listen, you have told us that you have a Father in heaven who made all, and that he who did not obey Him was cast into the flames. We have asked you to instruct us. When you go away, what shall we do?' "

Most Frenchmen and all missionaries were repatriated to France in this year of 1629. Brébeuf, unaware of the future, now began a round of minor administrative duties in Jesuit houses of Normandy. Actually, he was only marking time. Canada would soon beckon once again!

RETURN TO HURONIA

With the signing of the treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1632, France regained control of New France and the blackrobes could resume their interrupted labors. This time Brébeuf set out with two fellow Jesuits, Anthony Daniel, the future martyr, and Ambroise Davost. They arrived in Quebec on May 23, 1633. Brébeuf had been away four years.

These three blackrobes set out on the arduous canoe trip to Huronia in July 1634. They did not have an easy time of it, especially Davost who travelled with a surly crew of Hurons. Brébeuf has preserved for us an excellent account of this trip to Huronia in his *Relation* of 1635. The whole of this *Relation* which he sent to Le Jeune at Quebec is a mine of information about the trip, the Hurons and the land of Huronia. One simply has to marvel at the direct, forceful and entertaining narrative skill of Brébeuf.

The trip itself from Three Rivers to Huronia covered roughly 800 miles. The route followed by Brébeuf and his companions was the Ottawa river route, for the St. Lawrence river and Lake Ontario passage had been successfully blockaded by the hostile Iroquois bent on destroying both the Huron fur trade and the Hurons themselves.

THE LONG VOYAGE

Padding their light bark canoes, for hours at a stretch, the Hurons travelled up the St. Lawrence from Three Rivers to the point where this great river met the Ottawa. They then ascended the Ottawa to where it joined, well to the north, the Mattawa which took them to Mud Lake. Further along they crossed large and, at times, rough Lake

Nipissing, the region of their friendly allies the Algonkian Nipissings. From the western end of Lake Nipissing they descended the French River until they came to Georgian Bay, a rather large inlet of Lake Huron.

Once they had reached Georgian Bay, the Hurons were back in home waters and at the north-northwest boundary of Huronia.

This long trip, some 800 miles, was not a smooth one, for the rivers were full of dangerous rapids and impassable waterfalls. These natural barriers called for wearisome portages when canoes and equipment had to be laboriously carried or dragged, often long distances over rugged terrain. On this trip, his second to the upper country, Brébeuf counted the number of such portages and noted that the party carried their things thirty-five times and dragged them at least fifty!

As for their food on the way, Brébeuf mentioned that this usually consisted of corn ground somewhat coarsely between two stones. By mixing it with water they made a kind of gruel. Sometimes they ate a bit of fish caught by chance, but usually it had to be purchased from some Indian tribe along the way.

The trip was never a pleasant one, for all had to sleep on the bare earth or on hard rock, and this after trudging often in water, mud and through the dark, entangled forest, where swarms of mosquitoes and black flies made life completely miserable. At night, the missionaries had to sleep beside the exhausted Hurons and endure the inevitable stench of sweaty and unwashed bodies.

Brébeuf also mentioned the long, tiresome silence one was reduced to, especially when ignorant of the Indian tongue.

The paddling, of course, was gruelling and prolonged, and could last from shortly after sunrise to sunset. This and the constant portaging left the unaccustomed European bone-weary and exhausted and scarcely made the new day a welcome one. It was indeed a sobering introduction to the mission land of Huronia.

Brébeuf described his own experience of 1634 as follows: "To be sure, I was at times so weary that my body could do no more. But at the same time my soul was filled with great happiness as I realized that I was suffering this for God. No one can know this feeling unless he has experienced it."

A REAL PSYCHOLOGIST!

A few years later, in 1637, Brébeuf drew up a list of instructions for Jesuit missionaries destined to work among the Hurons. These reflect his own true and tried experience and a special sensitivity towards the

Indians themselves: you must love these Hurons, ransomed by the blood of the Son of God, as brothers; you must never keep the Indians waiting at the time of embarking; carry a tinder-box or a piece of burning-glass, or both, to make fire for them during the day for smoking, and in the evening when it is necessary to camp, as these little services win their hearts; try to eat the food they offer you, and eat all you can, for you may not eat again for hours; eat as soon as the day breaks, for Indians, when on the road, eat only at the rising and the setting of the sun; be prompt in embarking and disembarking and do not carry any water or sand into the canoe; be the least troublesome to the Indians; do not ask questions: silence is golden; bear with their imperfections, and you must try always to be and to appear cheerful; share little gifts with them; always carry something during the portages; do not be ceremonious with the Indians; do not paddle unless you intend always to paddle; the Indians will keep later that opinion of you which they have formed during the trip; always show any other Indians you meet on the way a cheerful face and show that you readily accept the fatigues of the journey.

Echon, the name by which Brébeuf was known among the Hurons, arrived safely in Huronia on August 5th. He was warmly welcomed by his friends of 1626-1629, and at first he lodged with a leading Huron, benefiting from the traditional Indian hospitality. Later, Brébeuf decided it would be wiser for the missionaries and their French domestics to build a cabin of their own. Accordingly, they erected a simple but solid cabin, Indian style, in the village of Ihonatiria.

THE DIFFICULT YEARS

In the years that followed, the blackrobes had to contend with all the reluctance of the Hurons to accept new ways and especially new religious beliefs. Illnesses that afflicted the Hurons because of their contacts with the whites and because of their lack of basic hygiene complicated the missionaries' dealings with the Hurons. Superstitious as a group the Hurons readily blamed the newcomers for any disaster that occurred.

So progress and evangelization were slow. It would be only in June 1637 that Brébeuf would succeed in making his first adult convert in good health, a leading Huron by the name of Pierre Tsiouendaentaha. Because of this man's example and that of the famous Joseph Chiwatenha, a convert two months later, christianity began to make slow but sure headway.

Yet in 1637 everything nearly ended in total disaster. Dejected by

recurring epidemics, crop failures and defeats in battle, those Hurons opposed to the presence of the blackrobes persuaded the council to condemn them to death. The missionaries even drew up a sort of last will and testament. But, even with death staring them in the face, Brébeuf and the others, much to the astonishment of the Hurons, carried on calmly and bravely and finally overcame the crisis.

In 1638, Brébeuf was replaced as superior in Huronia by Jérôme Lalemant. He moved to the Huron village of Teanaostaiaë. At first, he succeeded admirably, but disaffection set in and Brébeuf and his companion Father Chaumonot were severely beaten in an uprising.

Later, after a fruitless mission to the distant Neutral nation, Brébeuf was sent for a respite to Quebec; for one thing, he had a broken left clavicle as a reminder of that dangerous and disheartening trip.

From 1641 to 1644 Brébeuf had to serve his beloved Huronia from Quebec where he acted as provisioner for the missions of Georgian Bay. But even here he was not spared persecution and suffering, in the form of the increasingly bold Iroquois marauders. These "pirates of the fur trade" and of the Huron supply convoys interrupted and pillaged a number of his precious shipments.

The great man finally returned to Huronia in September of 1644. For him it was a moment of profound joy.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

In a way the next few years would be the golden years for the christian faith in Huronia. More and more the Hurons listened to their blackrobes, followed instructions with rapt attention and then asked for baptism. The numbers of the baptized increased steadily and by 1647 could be counted in the thousands.

THE GATHERING STORM

In 1648 Huronia began to crumble under the incessant attacks of the well-armed Iroquois now determined to destroy their long-standing enemy the Huron nation. The Hurons, for all their bravery, were very negligent in maintaining vigilance and allowed themselves time and time again to be ambushed and overrun.

We know that in 1647 no Huron convoy dared go down to trade at Three Rivers. On July 4, 1648 a large force of Iroquois surprised and destroyed Teanaostaiaë, a large Huron outpost to the south. It was a crushing blow. The Iroquois swiftly withdrew before any counter-attack could be mounted against them.

On March 16, 1649, 1200 well-armed Iroquois, escaping all notice,

attacked the village of St. Ignace at dawn and seized it and its inhabitants with ridiculous ease. A few hours later they besieged the neighboring village of St. Louis and, after a short but fierce struggle, overwhelmed it too. It was here that they laid hands on Brébeuf and his younger companion Gabriel Lalemant. These were dragged off in great triumph to St. Ignace.

MARTYRDOM

Fastened to stakes and summarily subjected to brutal torture the two blackrobes now faced their moment of martyrdom, and it had come suddenly and without warning.

Brébeuf was assailed with blows to his head, face, shoulders, loins and legs. Yet all he thought of was his beloved Hurons now fellow captives. "My children," he said to them, "let us lift our eyes to heaven at the height of our afflictions; let us remember that God is the witness of our sufferings, and will soon be our exceeding great reward. Let us die in this faith; and let us hope from his goodness the fulfillment of his promises. I have more pity for you than for myself; but sustain with courage the few remaining torments. They will end with our lives. The glory which follows them will never have an end."

"Echon," these said to him, "our spirits will be in heaven when our bodies shall be suffering on earth. Pray to God for us, that he may show us mercy. We will invoke him even until death."

For the next few hours it was torture by fire, necklaces of red-hot hatchets, burning-coals, mutilation, mock baptism with boiling water and scalping. "Father Jean de Brébeuf," writes his friend Paul Rague-neau, "suffered like a rock, insensible to the fires and the flames, without uttering any cry, and keeping a profound silence, which astonished his executioners themselves. No doubt, his heart was then reposing in his God. Then, returning to himself, he preached to those infidels, and still more to many christian captives, who had compassion on him."

Death came for this stalwart blackrobe about four p.m., on that March 16, 1649. He who could be described as an apostle, a brave adventurer, a skilled writer, a careful ethnologist, a man of vision had now become a martyr. His goodness was legendary with all who had known him – Champlain, his Jesuit brethren who loved and admired him, Mère Marie de l'Incarnation and thousands of unknown Hurons.

A MAN OF GOD

In a tale briefly told, it is so easy to leave much unsaid. We must understand, however, that this man was a real apostle and a man of "eminent

holiness.” God for him was a huge, pressing reality and he longed to share his faith and deep happiness with others, especially those who had never heard of Him. For him, the Indians were his brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Simple and straightforward, Brébeuf possessed a gentleness that won hearts. No one could question his courage, his love of the cross and his dedication. He was also one of those quiet, effective leaders among men. Yet, like all the saints, he was so unsure of himself before God. With disarming simplicity he wrote on one occasion: “For fear that God should cut me off at the root, as a fruitless tree, I have prayed him that he still suffer me to stand, this year; and I have promised Him that I would yield Him better fruits than in the past.”

Brébeuf died at the age of fifty-six years by the kind of death fitting for the first apostle to the Hurons. Church authorities recognized this officially on June 29, 1930, when Jean de Brébeuf and his companions were canonized by Pope Pius XI. ❀



6

Gabriel Lalemant/1610-1649

by ANGUS MACDOUGALL

Three Lalemants made their mark as Jesuit blackrobes in 17th century Canada. There was Charles, the first to come, brother of Jérôme and uncle of Gabriel. Charles landed at Quebec with Brébeuf in 1625. After his enforced return to France in 1629 and after the restoration of New France in 1632, Charles continued his missionary role by acting as procurator for the mission of Canada.

His brother, Jérôme, a very illustrious Jesuit in 17th century Quebec, followed in Charles' footsteps and arrived in Canada in 1638. He immediately set out for Huronia and replaced the wonderful Jean de Brébeuf as superior of the Huron mission. To him fell the task of building Sainte-Marie, the ambitious central mission residence, and it was he who, in great measure, systematized the evangelization of the growing mission to the Hurons and their neighbors the Tobaccos and the Nipissings.

Jérôme went to Quebec in 1645 to assume control of the whole Canadian mission and so was at the helm during the difficult days of Iroquois attacks and the eventual destruction of the Hurons and their flourishing mission.

A truly eminent Jesuit in his time, Jérôme was the advisor of governors, Bishop Laval and the other leaders of New France; he was a talented and devoted superior; a gifted director of souls, and a man much esteemed for his wisdom, prudence and charity. He served the Canadian mission long and well and has left us some of the finest *Relations*, especially those of 1646-49 and 1660-64.

GABRIEL THE NEPHEW

Gabriel, the nephew of Charles and Jérôme, arrived in Quebec only many years after his uncles, but his martyrdom at the hands of the Iroquois in March 1649 has given him the place of honor among these splendid 17th century Lalemants.

Our martyr was born in Paris, October 31, 1610. He was the son of an able French jurist and the third of six children, five of whom entered the religious life. His older brother Bruno became a Carthusian monk, three sisters became nuns, and Gabriel entered the Jesuit Order on March 24, 1630, at the age of nineteen. The youngest child, a boy, grew up to be, like his father, a successful lawyer and an admirable Christian.

His family must have been surely a deeply christian one, for Gabriel's mother was left a widow with young children and brought them up well and with a profound sense of dedication. She herself, after her children had reached maturity and after the martyrdom of her son Gabriel, joined the Recollectines and ended her days in seclusion and prayer.

Gabriel, after his novitiate, taught for several years in various Jesuit colleges. He then made his theological studies at Bourges and was ordained a priest in that city in 1638. After the priesthood he continued to teach, being professor of philosophy at Moulins, and later was "prefect" at the famous college of La Flèche. But ever since his ordination Gabriel had begged his superiors to send him to the mission of New France. The example of his exemplary uncles spurred him on.

TO NEW FRANCE – 1646

We know that Gabriel was not very robust. Indeed, Father Bressani, a fellow missionary in New France and among the Hurons, referred to him as a man of extremely frail constitution. This, no doubt, was the main reason for deferring his departure for Quebec. However, his obvious goodness, generosity and insistence overcame all obstacles in 1646.

His uncle Jérôme welcomed him to Quebec but hesitated to send him up to Huronia. He knew from his own experience the difficulties and rigors of that mission. So for the first two years he applied Gabriel to priestly ministry in and around Quebec and at Three Rivers, the great trading centre. In 1648 he had even decided to send him among the Algonkian Montagnais who were not too far from Quebec.

However, circumstances changed and the uncle finally allowed him to leave for Huronia along with Fathers Bressani, Bonin, Daran and Greslon and a large party of Frenchmen and Hurons. After all, the Iroquois menace was a real one and both French and Hurons had to travel in large numbers for their own safety and protection. They reached Huronia in August 1648.

AUGUST TO MARCH 1648-49

The new missionary among the Hurons, now thirty-eight years of age, seemed right in his element. He studied the difficult Huron language at the village of Ossossané under the direction of the able Father Chaumonot. The experienced missionary marvelled at his pupil's rapid progress in the language and later remarked to Jérôme Lalemant how seriously and successfully his nephew had applied himself to this task.

When Gabriel was deemed ready for more active missionary work he was sent by the superior, Father Paul Ragueneau, to assist the great veteran Jean de Brébeuf. In February 1649 he relieved Father Noël Chabanel who then left for the more distant mission of Saint-Jean among the Tobaccos. It was an eventful change for both of them!

Little did Gabriel know, but he would have only a month of active apostolic labor at the side of the admirable Brébeuf. Both were extremely good and zealous priests, so we can well imagine how content they must have been making the rounds of their mission that comprised five villages to the east of Sainte-Marie. St. Ignace and St. Louis are the two we remember best.

As the frontiers of Huronia had shrunk under the incessant incursions by the Iroquois, villages like St. Ignace and St. Louis suddenly became alarmingly exposed to the attacks of the enemy. Indeed in March 1649, most of the Huron warriors from the villages were scouring the woods to discover the whereabouts of the enemy – but in vain! The crafty Iroquois – 1200 strong and well armed – had outwitted the Hurons and had arrived in the vicinity of St. Ignace completely undetected.

Early in the morning of March 16, 1649, as the light of day was breaking, they found the one weak and unprotected spot in the palisaded village and swiftly broke in and overran the place. Five hundred Hurons, mostly older people, women and children, were quickly subdued. Some were killed instantly but most were taken prisoner. Only three managed to escape to warn St. Louis of this disaster and of what was to come.

It was like a death blow to an already staggering Huronia.

CAPTURE

At St. Louis, the old people, the sick, the women and children immediately fled off to other Huron villages. Only eighty warriors were left and these were resolved to fight the enemy and gain valuable time for the fleeing villagers. And with these eighty stayed the two missionaries Brébeuf and Lalemant. Despite the pleas of the Hurons that they

escape while there was time, the two fathers preferred to remain in this hour of crisis. As Ragueneau, their friend, would say later: "the salvation of their flock was dearer to them than life itself."

About an hour later the Iroquois surrounded St. Louis and pressed their attack. The eighty Hurons fought desperately to keep them at bay. And all the while Brébeuf and Lalemant, amid the din and shouting, busied themselves with encouragement, confessions and baptisms.

When one pagan Huron, dismayed at the sight of so many Iroquois attackers, wished to run away, Stephen Annaotaha, a Christian and outstanding warrior, rebuked him sharply with "What, could we forsake these two good fathers who have exposed their lives for us? Their love of our salvation will be the cause of their death. They cannot escape now over the snow, so let us die with them and we shall go to heaven with them."

On the third assault the village fell into the hands of the Iroquois. The few remaining Hurons and the two blackrobes were seized and led off in triumph. They would provide the victors with much sport!

HOURS OF AGONY

"As soon as they were taken captive," wrote Ragueneau, "the Iroquois stripped them of their clothes and tore off some of their nails. When they reached the village of St. Ignace, they were welcomed with a hailstorm of blows on the shoulders, the back, the legs, the stomach, the chest and the face, until there did not remain a single part of their bodies without pain."

Then the two fathers were dragged into the centre of the village and fastened to stakes. Now the torture became deliberate and fiendish. They were burned with firebrands, their flesh was pierced with sharp awls, collars of red-hot hatchets were strung around their necks, their flesh was ripped and torn away, and belts of burning pitch were fastened to their bodies. Cruelty was heaped upon cruelty.

At the height of these dreadful torments, Father Gabriel, we are told by Huron witnesses, lifted his eyes to heaven, joined his hands from time to time, and, breathing a sigh to God, invoked His help.

Later the aroused executioners gouged out his eyes and put burning coals in the sockets, and then, in mockery of the baptisms he had performed so recently at St. Louis, they poured scalding hot water over him in order, they jeered, to send him the more quickly to heaven.

Gabriel's companion, Brébeuf, died from his tortures about 4 p.m., that March 16th. Gabriel, frail though he was, endured his dreadful sufferings all that day and throughout the night, dying only, after a

hatchet blow over his left ear, at 9 a.m. the following day. As a final gesture the Iroquois tore out his heart and devoured it in order to imbibe some of his courage!

After the sudden withdrawal of the Iroquois war party from the area on March 19th, seven Frenchmen went to St. Ignace to carry the bodies of the two fathers to Sainte-Marie. There, on Sunday, March 21st, their bodies – “precious relics” – were buried.

Ragueneau, the superior at Sainte-Marie, recalled the scene: “All who assisted at their obsequies were filled with such consolation and tender devotion that, far from being afraid, they hoped for a similar death for themselves.”

And thus it was that the last to enter the lists of Huronia was one of the first to win the crown. He had spent only six months in the land of martyrs. But for him it had been an intense period of accomplishing much in a short time.

THE SERVANT OF GOD

For so long he had wished to give up everything for the salvation of souls. In his diary he spoke of his readiness to be a holocaust in the service of God and of his desire to make amends for any offences in his life by extraordinary suffering. And he had prayed that his missionary work and sufferings would bring blessings upon his beloved mother and the family to whom he was so indebted.

A Jesuit for nineteen years, Gabriel showed forth remarkable purity of conscience, unmistakable union with God, and a sincere love of others. Serious, reserved and gentle he was much beloved by all who knew him. Even in the few months he lived among the Hurons he had endeared himself to them by his ministrations. They called him Atironta, the name of a Huron chief.

Ragueneau, his first biographer, wrote that Gabriel had died for the cause of God and had found in Huronia the cross of Christ which he had sought.

His uncle, Jérôme Lalemant, had to break the news of his death to the family in France. He wrote to his niece – Gabriel’s sister – the carmelite nun in typical Lalemant fashion: “What happiness for our family . . . it seems to me the news should help you raise your heart and mind to God.”

Gabriel Lalemant, the martyr, was officially recognized and proclaimed as such by Pope Pius XI on June 29th, 1930. In popular devotion his memory is always linked with that of Jean de Brébeuf with whom he labored and died. ❀

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7

Charles Garnier/1606-1649

by JAMES MCGIVERN, S.J.

Over 300 years have come and gone since the fierce and hardy Iroquois attacked the Petun Indian nation and destroyed their homes and villages. Father Charles Garnier fell beneath their musket fire on the 7th of December 1649. His memory was never completely forgotten. For long years the Petuns kept alive their remembrance of this brave Priest. In 1666 when the wandering Father Claude Allouez came amongst them as they roamed the desolate wilderness north of Lake Superior, they had tears in their eyes as they reminisced about their beloved pastor who had given his life for them.

Though Garnier has been canonized and therefore his memory is still green, yet we find few who know much about him. But what an impression he must have created by his character and his presence that even dim memories are alive today. Scarcely was he dead than his fellow missionaries Fathers Leonard Garreau, Simon le Moyne and René Ménard are high in their praise of his apostolic work and life. Warmly they recall to mind this great souled apostle, the very acquaintance of whom was an inspiration to greater things.

In his report of 1650, Father Paul Ragueneau hastened to outline his life. In fact, he starts in immediately to gather notes for a process of canonization, and Father Joseph Marie Chaumonot did not hesitate to call upon Garnier's aid (as one would a Saint) to gain for himself the grace of a greater facility in speaking the native tongues. In Quebec, Mère Marie de l'Incarnation who, though never meeting him, had written to him and received letters from him, mourned his passing. She said: "A very large volume would be needed to tell the story of this reverend Father . . . He was extraordinarily humble, gentle, obedient and filled with many virtues" (Marie de l'Incarnation to her son Claude, August 30, 1650).

The story of Father Charles Garnier and his tragic death were well

known across Europe within twenty-five years of his martyrdom. Starting, of course, with Father Paul Ragueneau's report, the story would be taken up by various writers of the Jesuit Order: Alegambe at Rome, Du Creux at Paris, and Tanner at Prague. Unfortunately, however, the misfortunes of the Jesuits and their suppression in 1773, and the final disappearance of the Order in Canada, with the death of Father Jean Joseph Casot, cast a shadow over the memory of Charles Garnier. But it still lived on until he was beatified June 21, 1925, and canonized June 29, 1930.

THE EARLY YEARS

Charles Garnier was born on the 25th of May, 1606, in Paris, in the parish of Saint Gervais which claims to be the parish church of two of the Canadian Martyrs. Besides Father Charles Garnier the parish is also proud to claim Father Gabriel Lalemant. Charles Garnier was descended from noble and distinguished families. His father, Jean Garnier, was one of the Under Secretaries of Henri III and later was placed in charge of the Treasury in Normandy. Father Charles' grandfather was an officer in the Royal Army and suffered martyrdom because he refused to give up his Catholic faith. Father Charles' mother, Anne de Garault, was from a noble family of Orleans. Unfortunately, she died just a few years after his birth.

The young man studied at Clermont College, one of the oldest of the Jesuit schools of France, and later entered the Society of Jesus, on the 26th of September, 1624. After finishing his novitiate, Charles Garnier returned to his Alma Mater, the College of Clermont, as Prefect over the students. At the same time he carried out his studies in rhetoric and philosophy. After this course was finished he was sent to the College of Eu as a teacher in the lower grades of the school. He spent two years there and was then ordered back to his old school for the study of theology.

THE CALL OF NEW FRANCE

He was ordained a priest in 1635. It is about this time that the young Father Garnier expressed a desire to go on the missions and particularly the missions of New France. His zeal for the conversion of the Indians was real and ardent. His superiors consented but laid down a condition that nearly ruined matters. The condition was that he should obtain the consent of his father; but the latter was entirely opposed. Father Charles therefore had to put off his departure for an entire year. This obstacle only served to increase his ardour for the foreign missions.

In an early life, or sketch rather, of Father Charles Garnier, it is said that his thoughts were so constant in this matter that night and day he thought only of working for the salvation of the Indians. He was determined to spend his life, even to his very last breath, on the missions. It is also said that in his dreams God gave him the foresight to realize the possibility and the dangers of the death he was to die. His zeal, however, made light of this foretaste of danger. He had many an argument with his father until at last, with great regret, his father consented. Father Charles Garnier finally set out and arrived at Quebec on the 11th of June, 1636.

The Huron name for St. Charles Garnier has been given as *Ouracha*. The meaning of this name has, so far as I know, never been given, but we can probably find the meaning through Father Pierre Potier's "Radices Huronicae" published in the 15th Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario, (p. 452).

It is tempting to think, considering the accusation that was so often made against the missionaries of bringing a drought down upon the Indian and the country, that Garnier may have been, in the minds of the Hurons, associated with the ending of such a drought, and in that case we would almost say that his name meant "rain bringer" or "rain-cloud." As such, and we know this is true, he would nearly always be welcomed in an Indian village. Certainly the words as given in Father Potier's work would help us to think this way.

THE OCEAN CROSSING

The difficulty of the crossing and the apostolic zeal and effort of the new missionary are well described in a letter written to his father immediately after the crossing. ". . . Although I did not experience any great difficulty or danger and our Captain took every care to make the crossing as pleasant as possible, it is evident that the voyage is not without its crosses. And this is particularly so for a member of a religious order because he has no privacy away from the noise and the crowd in order to pray. I don't mention here those other inconveniences and sea sickness which takes the heart out of one.

"What particularly pleased me was the sight of my flock coming to the Sacraments. Over and above special feast days some received Holy Communion on Sundays and ordinary days. Almost all also went to Holy Communion on the two greatest feasts, that is on Pentecost and Corpus Christi. In this they followed the examples of our leader and of Monsieur de Montmagny. These last have given us good examples in many other things but particularly in the care they have taken of the

sick, particularly of one poor family on board, giving them the best of what they had, even giving up something themselves.

“Lest I be too long, I will say nothing of the christian regulations enacted and put up aboard the vessel against swearing, theft, and quarrelsomeness. . . .

“We gave Viaticum to a sailor who had fallen from the top of the mizzenmast to the deck. He was well-disposed to die. However, as I saw him in great discomfort, unable to sleep, I gave him my cabin and went in with Father Chastelain in his, but the sick man found this cabin too stuffy so the next day I occupied it again but left him my mattress so he could sleep even in the midst of the cannons. Hearing this, the Captain made me take one of his. . . .

“That is something of what has taken place on our voyage. If any good comes out of it may the glory be given only to God. On my part at least I am certain that I was lacking a good deal in humility and that I offered many a hindrance to the plan of God by my laziness. Through His goodness he conducted us without incident to Quebec the 11th day of June, the eve of St. Barnabas Day, the one surnamed Joseph, in the ship named after this great Saint.

“We embarked on the octave of the Feast of Our Lady’s Annunciation, so much so that I can well say that under the safeguard of the Holy Virgin and her Glorious Spouse, we finished this crossing without incident.”

THE PULL OF HURONIA

Father Charles had no desire to stay in Quebec. His heart burned – as a letter to his brother shows – to go on to the Mission of the Hurons. “If for me Canada is a holy and sacred temple, which God made for me in this world, the Huron country is its holy of holies . . . let us, therefore, leap for joy in this land of blessing.” In this same letter he says he cannot give greater details. “I really do not have the time, because any moment now, I am waiting for the means to take Father Chastelain and myself to meet the Hurons . . . God willing in six or seven hours, that is at dawn, I will be leaving to go to the Hurons” (July 20, 1636). Of the long and usually painful journey – a trip of some 800 or 900 miles – Father Garnier says little, though he did send a short note to Father Paul le Jeune telling of the trip (August 8, 1636).

“May God be forever blessed! Since yesterday we have been here among the Nipissings. So happy and in such good health that I am ashamed of it. . . . He has treated the child as a child: I did not paddle; I carried only my own baggage, except for three days during the por-

tages when I carried a little package that someone offered me because *one of our Indians fell ill. Is that not being treated like a child?* . . . We arrived at the island on the eve of the Feast of St. Ignatius. We bought some Indian corn because our peas gave out. This corn lasted us until we reached here. Our Indians did not have any – at least they found only one cache of it. Up to the present we have found but little fish. We are expecting Father Davost here today.”

On August 12, 1636, after a relatively short and favorable journey, the new missionary was welcomed with open arms. Of course, he must start slowly, even though he had the consolation of baptizing a little Indian boy and naming him Joseph in honor of St. Joseph.

One of his first experiences was to haunt him for his whole life, for in it he saw what could be his own fate. He never got over the horror of his first sight of the torture of an Iroquois captive. The missionaries did, however, baptize the victim.

A DIFFICULT YEAR

That first year was also one of a terrible crisis among the Indians and it threatened to bring martyrdom to all the missionaries. Both the natives and the missionaries, among whom was Garnier, fell victims to the ravages of small pox. But, worse still perhaps, the Indians looked on the blackrobes as causing it. “Because, you should know, Father, that Jesus Christ has honored us with some of His sufferings. In this country, we have been cried out against like pests – everybody was looking at us as if we were going to make them die . . . we were urged to take that pest out of the country” (Letter of 1638).

As a matter of record, it may be noted that all the Fathers present wrote and signed a letter. “We are perhaps on the point of shedding our blood and giving our lives to serve our good Lord Jesus Christ.” However, God did not then exact the sacrifice of their lives. In the letter (1638) already quoted, he gives a summary of a year’s work. With varying degrees of success this would be a description of all he ever did in Huronia.

APOSTOLIC EFFORTS

“My daily work, so far, has consisted of visiting Indian huts and seeing the sick, so as to instruct and baptize them when they are in danger; and most of the sick were in serious danger of death, and even several of them died. You know how much money you spent to have me learn the profession of surgeon. This is the type of work I do in this country. I don’t operate, but tend a multitude of small wounds and burns. But,

to come back to baptism, in this one village alone, thank God, we have baptized approximately 100 since I came. Up to this day, of these 100 Indians baptized, 44 died shortly thereafter, that is 24 adults and 20 children, most of whom were infants. . . .

“Again you wonder whether I am progressing with the language, and if I can make myself understood. Yes, thank God, I can do it pretty well. . . . In France they think we have lots of free time (here) to devote to our friends, and that is where they are wrong. Quite often I cannot find 15 minutes to study during the day because of the frequent visits I have to make and the many interruptions by the Indians when we are in our cabin. . . .

“We are about ready to move our residence of St. Joseph from the small village, called Ithonatiria, to the largest village of the country, called Teanaostaiaë. Louis de Ste. Foy was born there; you must have seen him in France 9 or 10 years ago. I don’t know yet if I will be going to this village or stay here. May God’s will be done. . . .

“We are beginning to catch our breath, and they are mistaken, those who think that all we have to do to convert the Indians is to show them a Crucifix. It is more difficult than they think.

“Father Pierre Pijart and I were sent to the mission of the Apostles. This is in the Petun nation, where I had already spent the previous winter. We received a very poor welcome the first year. The second, they looked upon us with less jaundiced eyes. We found some persons, thank God, who listened to us. With the help of God, patience and perseverance will win out. It is true that these missions are full of crosses. There is the difficulty of the trails during the winter, there is the food, the clothing, the lodging, the smoke, etc., but the principal obstacle is the difficulty in which we find ourselves of praying and getting a little rest away from the noise. There is also the deprivation of Mass, which we either cannot say at all, or only very seldom. We thought that on two occasions we were about to lose our lives on the trail. One time it was on a frozen lake where the evening that we crossed it two Indians died of the cold, etc.

“My dear brother, pray for us that God may keep us and make strong the courage that He gives us. We sorely need it” (June 23, 1641).

AMONG THE PETUNS

“Let us say a word about our Huron missions. You know well that, in years past, we spent the winter in the mission of the Apostles or the Tobacco nation, while others worked among the Neutrals, or mission

of the Angels. As you know, we had undertaken to bring the Gospel to these nations as well as to the Hurons. But this year we made only a few trips to the mission of the Apostles, scarcely stopping there, and have given up our mission among the Neutrals; *firstly*, because Father John de Brébeuf, who was with them last year, remained this winter in Quebec, and *secondly*, because we have learnt from experience that these people are converted only after long and solid instruction. The result has been that this winter we have reduced our commitments concentrating on the apostolate of the principal Huron villages.

“Fathers Mercier and Ragueneau spent the winter giving instruction in the village of the Immaculate Conception, Reverend Father Lalemant and Father Chaumonot at St. Michael and St. John the Baptist, Father Chastelain and Father Pijart devoted themselves to visiting from time to time several villages nearest to this house and Father Le Moyne and I were assigned to the village of St. Joseph as our share. In all these places we have higher hopes than ever before. . . .

“To come down to the particulars of my task, we were used to going every day to instruct some Christians of St. Joseph, but both they and we were deprived of the consolation of Holy Mass, there being no chapel in this village. . . . But Our Lord inspired one of our Christians to offer one end of his cabin for this purpose. . . . We turned the end of the cabin offered us into a chapel to St. Joseph, which was ready in time for his feast. From that time on we experienced great consolation in assembling our Christians there, and the devotions we held were of great help to them. The greater number came to hear Mass in this chapel every day and came regularly to confession here on Saturdays” (May 22, 1642).

A few years later he would write: “I am still in this village of St. Joseph with Father René Ménard. We have a little congregation that we are trying to preserve and increase, with the grace of God, which appears quite visibly to us; not that there is a movement towards the Faith on the part of very many persons, as the village is greatly diminished in population, and its people are slow and lagging in embracing the Faith. . . .

“Hardly have we time in the morning to make our meditation, when the Christians come to Mass. During Mass we are occupied in making them pray, and in saying a few words to them, to maintain them in devotion. After our Masses . . . we take the opportunity to instruct them in the Catechism or in pious practices, or we even teach them some prayers.

“The rest of the day is spent in similar exercises. . . . In brief, sunset-

time has come, when we say the prayers again, at which they attend. At last, we are quite surprised that the day is over" (June 7, 1645).

WITH FATHER GARREAU

A letter written in 1648 speaks of his labors among the Petuns.

"I told you that my Superior sent me along with Father Garreau, to a new mission called the Petun nation. We gave it the name of the mission of the Apostles. I call it a new mission because, although the late Father Jogues and I were there in 1639, and Father Pierre Pijart in 1640, still we did hardly anything but baptize a few sick and a few adults. . . . But finally, when these Petuns asked for some of our missionaries, partly to instruct them and partly to frighten their enemies – by reports that the French lived in their territory – Father Garreau and I were sent. He was to instruct the Algonkins who lived among the Petuns . . . and I was to instruct the Hurons. We stayed in a town inhabited by Hurons and Algonkins.

"There the Father worked hard all the winter of 1646 learning the Algonkian language. He made such progress that by spring the Algonkins listened to him as he spoke of the mysteries of our Faith. But the devil, all too scared that these people would escape from the captivity in which he had held them for so many centuries, found means to disperse them and separate them from this Father who had begun to work their deliverance. He caused a quarrel between the Hurons and Algonkins by a murder. An Algonkin was massacred one night and the murderer could not be found. The Algonkins accused the Hurons, left the village of Ekarenniondi where they had been staying and went to join another Algonkian tribe, a two days' trip away.

". . . we have worked together since last summer principally in two Huron villages that are four leagues apart. One is called Ekarenniondi, dedicated to St. Matthias, the other Etharita, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. We have a small chapel in each. In both villages there are a few Christians and a large number of catechumens. The latter are kept in that status much longer than in our other older missions. . . .

"Father Garreau and I are almost always separated from each other. He might spend ten days or two weeks at one village and I the same time at another, then he and I would get together for two or three days. So that is how we live, without companionship except that of our good Angels and the poor Indians whom we instruct. We have to admit, though, that because we are alone God gives us more grace and consolation" (April 28, 1648).

But we are now coming to the end. The martyrdoms of Fathers

Daniel, Brébeuf and Lalemant had a tremendous effect on him. In a letter (April 25, 1649) he would say: "How happy I should be to die with this little flock of the Master, just as three of our Fathers died for Him in the past year; I refer to Fathers Anthony Daniel, Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant. Father Daniel was killed on July 4th while ministering to his little flock in the village of St. Joseph. You already know that I was changed from there two years ago. May God be praised for having seen fit to punish me for my sins by denying me the crown that He has given to Father Daniel. This holy father begged his people to escape but he himself preferred to remain behind to save as many souls as possible. You will read an account of his holy death in the *Relations* as well as the account of Fathers Brébeuf and Lalemant. I recall the latter at college as a student and boarder. He came here only last summer and was given the martyr's crown at the end of this winter with Father Brébeuf."

RAGUENEAU'S ACCOUNT

Father Paul Ragueneau gives us the first authentic account of Father Garnier's death.

"For many years we had two missions with two Fathers in each of them in the hills which we called the nation of the Petuns. The one nearest the enemy (Iroquois) was that of St. John, which contained the village of the same name with about five or six hundred families. It was a mission field watered by the sweat of one of the finest missionaries of the whole country. It was also to be watered with his blood, because he died with his flock and brought them to heaven with him. The day was at hand when God wished to turn it into a church triumphant, though up to that time it was always militant and might well go under the name of church suffering.

"We received news about the end of the month of November from two christian Hurons who had escaped from a band of about three hundred Iroquois that the Iroquois were still undecided whether to turn towards the Petun nation or attack the island where we were stationed. Thereupon, we tightened our defences and held back our Hurons who had plans of starting out on a campaign against the advancing enemy. At the same time we immediately sent word to the Petun nation, who were overjoyed. They looked upon the enemy as even then conquered and upon themselves as already victors. They stood firm for some days but soon tired of waiting for victory to come and seek them out. . . . They set out in short order, fearing lest the Iroquois would slip through their hands when they wanted to surprise them still on the march. They

left on the fifth of December (1649) and moved towards the place where they expected to find the Iroquois, but they (the Iroquois) had made a detour and were not anywhere to be found. To add to our misfortunes, as the Iroquois were approaching the village, they captured a man and a woman who were just leaving the place. They learned from the two captives the state of the place and knew it was stripped of the greater part of its people, so they seized the favorable opportunity and immediately proceeded to plunge the town into a torrent of fire and blood.

“It was on the seventh of December last year, 1649, that this group of Iroquois arrived at the gates of the village and cast unrestrained dismay and terror among the poor people, just when they thought that they were the conquerors. . . .

“The cruelty was inconceivable. Children were snatched from their mothers’ arms and thrown into the fire; other children saw their mothers laid prostrate at their feet or writhing in the flames without either side showing the slightest sign of compassion. It was a crime even to shed a tear. Those barbarians forced their victims to march in their captivity as they themselves marched in their triumph. . . .

MARTYRDOM

“Father Charles Garnier was the only one of our Fathers at the mission at the time. When the enemy appeared he was visiting the cabins and instructing the people, but when the alarm was given he came out and went straight to the church, where some Christians had gathered. ‘We are facing death, my brethren,’ he said to them, ‘pray to God and take flight by any possible avenue of escape. Cherish your faith for the rest of your life and may death find you thinking of God.’ He gave them his blessing and immediately set out to help other souls. No one thought of putting up a defence and everyone gave up entirely. . . . In his zeal he was everywhere at once, now giving absolution to the Christians he met, now running from one blazing cabin to another to baptize, in the very midst of flames, the children, the sick, and the catechumens. His own heart burned with no other fire than that of the love of God.

“It was in these holy duties that he met his death, which he neither feared nor avoided by a single step. One bullet from a gun pierced the upper part of his chest and at the same time another bullet went through the lower part of his abdomen and lodged in his thigh. . . .

“The good Father was seen very shortly afterwards joining his hands and saying some prayers. Then turning his head here and there, he saw

a poor creature about ten or twelve feet from him who, like himself, had just received his death blow but had still some life left in him. His love of God and zeal for souls were again stronger than death. He rose to his knees and, after a prayer, stood painfully and moved as best he could towards the agonizing man to help him die well. . . . Some time later the Father received two blows from a hatchet, one on each temple, that went right to the brain. That was the richest reward that he had hoped to receive from the goodness of God for all his past services. His body was stripped and left naked on the ground.

THOSE THAT MOURN . . .

“Two of our Fathers, who were in the nearest mission to him took in a few surviving christian fugitives, who arrived out of breath, several of them being covered with their own blood. All night long there was a series of alarms as everyone was tense with the fear that they would be visited with the same disaster. At daybreak they learned from some spies that the Iroquois had departed. The two Fathers left at once to see the sad spectacle with their own eyes. It was a sight worthy in God’s sight. There were corpses everywhere, one on top of another, of some poor Christians half burned in the remains of the fire-swept village, of others drenched in their own blood. . . . At last, in the middle of the ghost town, they came across the body they had come to find, but it was hardly recognizable, all covered with blood and ashes from the fire that had swept over it. But some christian Indians recognized their Father who had died for love of them. They buried him on the spot where the church had been, though there was no trace left of the church. It had been swallowed up in the flames. . . .

“Two days after the burning of the village, the Indians who had set out to meet the enemy returned home. They had come across the turn in the road which the enemy had taken and suspected the calamity that had happened. Now they saw it with their own eyes. At the sight of the ashes and the dead bodies of their parents, their wives and their children, they spent half a day in deep silence, seated on the ground Indian style, without raising their eyes or even uttering a sigh. They were like marble statues, not a word, not a look, not a move. That is the Indian way of mourning, at least for men and warriors. Tears, moans and lamentations, they say, are for women.

“Our loss of the pastor and of his flock was painful, but in both we must adore and love the Will of God in our behalf and that of His churches, since, to the very end, we must be disposed to accept whatever He wishes” (Thwaites, vol. 35, 107-119). ❀

8

Noël Chabanel/1613·1649

by PETER AMBROSIE

A CALL TO COURAGE

"I am going where obedience calls me, but whether I stay there or receive permission from my superior to return to the mission where I belong, I must serve God faithfully until death." These, perhaps his last recorded words, Noël Chabanel spoke on the very day of his death, Dec. 8, 1649 to the Fathers in charge of St. Matthias mission among the Petuns. They give us the measure of this unique Martyr and Saint. Mère Marie de l'Incarnation in a letter to her son dated Aug. 30, 1650 said of him, "Whatever may be, he died in the act of obedience."

What kind of man was Noël Chabanel? From the viewpoint of the length, intensity and success of their missionary activities the eight North American Martyrs fall into two groups: the "big four" and the "little four." Brébeuf, Daniel, Garnier and Jogues belong to the first class; Lalemant, Goupil, de la Lande and Noël Chabanel, to the second. The "little four" suffer by contrast with the herculean labors of the "big four." But all of them equally shed their blood in witness to Christ and His message.

EARLY YEARS

Noël Chabanel was the youngest of the priests and the last of the band of eight to suffer martyrdom in the new world. His birthplace in southeastern France, the village of Saugues about a hundred miles northwest of the port of Marseilles, nestled in hill country which was the source of four rivers, the Loire, Seine, Garonne and Rhône. Here on the banks of the Lozère, a tributary of the Loire, Chabanel was born on Feb. 2, 1613, the feast of the Purification of Our Lady. His father, a notary, and his mother sprung from merchant stock, raised their four children, Pierre, Claude, Antoinette and Noël, the youngest, in comfort, yet in the firmness of the traditional Catholic upbringing of early 17th century France.

Though the details of his boyhood are somewhat scanty, we know that Noël was first educated in the basic humanities in the Chapter school in Saugues and then as a teenager in higher studies at an unknown college. His brother Pierre entered the Society of Jesus in 1623 and Noël, just past seventeen years old, entered the Jesuit novitiate in Toulouse on Feb. 8, 1630. After a two years novitiate and his first vows he taught rhetoric quite successfully in the college of that city from 1632-1639.

From 1639 to 1641 he did his studies in theology there, followed by his Tertianship, a third probationary year, still in Toulouse, 1641-1642. In 1641 he was ordained a priest. His years of training ended in a classroom teaching rhetoric again, this time at the college of Rodez. The Jesuit catalogue for the Province of Toulouse leaves this pointed portrait of Chabanel: "Serious by nature – energetic – great stability – better than average intelligence."

BIRTH OF A MISSIONARY

During his twelve years as a Jesuit the young Society of Jesus knew its golden age in France, multiplying into five Provinces or territorial divisions between the years 1545 and 1616. Jesuit foreign missionary activity, too, spread east, west and south. From the famous *Jesuit Relations* Noël learned of the heroic work of his fellow Jesuits in New France. In the seventeenth century sophisticated France was thrilled with the tales graphically written each year by the Jesuits in New France. These were the *Jesuit Relations* – one of the world's most famous records of adventure, history and heroic sanctity, unique because they were history written on the spot in the hour of its making.

Especially during his Tertianship the tiny flame of his ambition to become a missionary fanned into a fierce desire. In the words of his chief chronicler, Paul Ragueneau, "God gave him a strong vocation for this country." Twice he wrote to the General of the Society of Jesus in Rome, Mutius Vitelleschi. The first time requesting that his studies be curtailed and that he be sent immediately to answer the urgent call for missionaries in New France. The reply of the General on November 15, 1642, though negative, left the door open. Finally on April 4, 1643 his obedient patience was rewarded when a reply from the General to his second letter allowed him to leave for New France.

On May 8, 1643 Noël's dream became a reality. As he stood aboardship in the port of Dieppe, this young priest, thirty years old, looked west across the Atlantic with its bright promise of adventure for Christ. Little did he suspect how strange, how mysterious, how demanding the

adventure in New France was to be for a sensitive young man raised and schooled in the comparative comfort, shelter and luxury of old France.

With Noël travelled two Jesuits, Gabriel Druillet and Leonard Garreau, a native of Limoges of the Province of Aquitaine. Could Noël suspect that Father Garreau would be the last Jesuit he would see and confide in, on the eve of his death?

ARRIVAL IN QUEBEC

The perilous crossing of the Atlantic in the early 17th century with its many hazards has often been described in the *Jesuit Relations*. This was Noël's special introduction to the new world and a presage of what was in store for him. After a three months' voyage they landed in the settlement of Quebec on August 15. Ironically, the *Relation* of that year records that his confrères in Quebec were overjoyed at the arrival of "three worthy workers, Religious of our Society, and very apt for the language." The life of Chabanel was to prove how unprophetic these words were to be for him! For, of the five Jesuit Martyrs killed in Canada, Noël was the only one who had no flair for the native languages.

INSECURITY OF THE FRENCH SETTLEMENTS

The picture in New France was anything but bright the past year. 1642 was a year of great crisis for the missionaries in Huronia. The Huron mission had been cut off from Quebec by the Iroquois blockade. No flotilla of Huron canoes had come down to Quebec for the yearly trade. By the same token no provisions had made their way back to the isolated mission in Huronia. Finally in the summer of 1642 Isaac Jogues, a veteran of six years in the Huron missions, was picked to break through the blockade for desperately needed supplies. Miraculously he made the journey to Quebec after thirty-five days canoeing. On his return trip to Sainte-Marie Jogues and René Goupil were ambushed and taken captive into Iroquois territory, where Goupil, surgeon and saint, suffered martyrdom on September 29, 1642, the first of the band of eight to die a martyr. Even the inhabitants of Quebec, Three Rivers and the recently founded settlement of Ville Marie (Montreal) did not escape the cruel and daring raids of the prowling Iroquois. It was during this period of fear and uncertainty that Noël landed in Quebec. Although warmly welcomed by his Jesuit brothers – and this compensated somewhat for the crude conditions he found – he could feel the atmosphere of danger, fear and insecurity.

A highlight of Noël's winter stay in Quebec was meeting the senior veteran missionary, Jean de Brébeuf who had left Huronia in 1641 suffering from a broken left clavicle sustained while on a mission among the Neutrals. In Quebec during his recuperation period Brébeuf served as procurator or supplier for the Huron mission. Because of the hazard of journeying that fall of 1643 to the Huron mission, Noël Chabanel had to stay in Quebec that winter getting his first initiation of missionary work in and around the settlement. Like all newly arrived blackrobes, his ignorance of the difficult Indian languages – so different from his polished French – would curtail his initial apostolate among the native people. So Father Noël would do chaplain duty at the Ursuline Convent and work with the colonists and soldiers of the little settlement.

HURONIA BOUND – 1644

When the ice went out of the St. Lawrence in the spring of 1644, Father Bressani made a desperate attempt to carry aid to the isolated Fathers in distant Huronia. He and his party were ambushed and taken captive by the lurking Iroquois. In late spring a few christian Hurons managed to arrive in Quebec from Huronia with word of the dire needs of the blackrobes there. On their return trip after trading they too were seized by the enemy. Finally, Governor Montmagny decided to send an armed escort of a score of French soldiers to Sainte-Marie, the black-robe missionary centre on the Wye River in Huronia. So in midsummer of 1644 Fathers Brébeuf, Chabanel and Garreau left Quebec in an attempt to reach Huronia.

ARRIVAL AT STE-MARIE AMONG THE HURONS

The treacherous northern water route via the Ottawa was another cruel initiation for Noël. The party reached the Residence of Ste-Marie on the Wye on September 7, 1644. Almost at once Noël Chabanel took up the study of the Huron language. For the next five years of his life Chabanel's world was to be encompassed by his life at Ste-Marie and a few missionary excursions, working first with Jean de Brébeuf and finally with Charles Garnier.

Here at Ste-Marie, face to face with the harsh realities of the country, Noël's zeal was spurred when he met the veteran missionaries of Huronia. From time to time they returned from their mission outposts to Ste-Marie which served as their base of operations, their council chamber, their refuge and place of recollection, their haven for spiritual and social comfort.

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

The *Relation* for this year informs us that Noël was destined at first to work with the nomadic Algonkins who were resident in the Huron district. After a winter's hard work at learning the Indian language he came to a shocking realization. Try as he would, he could not master the intricate Indian tongue. Paul Ragueneau, his superior at Ste-Marie, best describes this tragedy. "Once here, even after three, four, five years of study of the Indian language, he made such little progress that he could hardly be understood even in the most ordinary conversation. This was no small mortification for a man burning with the desire to convert the Indians. Besides, it was particularly painful, for his memory had always been good, as were his other talents, which was proven by his years of satisfactory teaching of rhetoric in France."

In one of the most touching documents of the *Jesuit Relations*, Ragueneau gives a poignant picture of the struggles of this heroic man who wrote of himself as a "bloodless martyr in the shadow of martyrdom." To make matters worse his tastes were so delicate and sensitive that he found everything about the Indian customs and culture crude, foreign, even revolting. One would think that this is more than enough suffering for one man to bear. But there is more. "When in addition God withdraws His visible graces, and remains hidden, although a person sighs for Him alone and when He leaves the soul a prey to sadness, disgust and natural aversions; these are trials which are greater than ordinary virtue can bear." Certain it is that, without the strength of God which Chabanel incessantly prayed for, his courage would have broken under the severe strain.

For five frightful years Chabanel had to endure this desolating martyrdom. During this agony Noël saw Brébeuf, Daniel, Garnier and others of his brothers competent and successful at their work. Here he was, frustrated before he could begin, denied the one essential tool for success – the ability to communicate with his native flock. Perhaps, though, the most bitter pill of all was the scorn and ridicule the natives heaped on him for his courageous but abortive attempts to speak their language – this, even from the children! He seemed easy prey to the subtle temptation assailing him again and again to leave this primitive country and return to France where there was plenty of work more suited to his character and talents.

Yet, Noël, though severely tested, refused to come down from the cross on which God had placed him. In fact to bind himself more irrevocably to his cross he made a vow to remain on it for life. The *Relation* of 1650 preserves for us the wording of this vow which he

pronounced at Ste-Marie on June 20, 1647 on the Feast of Corpus Christi. It is worth quoting in full as it reveals the steely quality of this person who, though sensitive by nature, by God's grace persevered to the bitter end.

“My Lord, Jesus Christ, who, by the admirable dispositions of Divine Providence, hast willed that I should be a helper of the holy apostles of this Huron vineyard, entirely unworthy though I be, drawn by the desire to cooperate with the designs which the Holy Ghost has upon me for the conversion of these Hurons to the faith; I, Noël Chabanel, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament of your Sacred Body and Most Precious Blood, which is the Testament of God with man; I vow perpetual stability in this Huron Mission; it being understood that all this is subject to the dictates of the Superiors of the Society of Jesus, who may dispose of me as they wish. I pray, then, O Lord, that You will deign to accept me as a permanent servant in this mission and that You will render me worthy of so sublime a ministry. Amen.”

That heroic vow won for Chabanel, in this life, strength to endure every hardship, and, on the day of the canonization of the Martyrs, the distinction of standing as an equal beside those whom he regarded as his superiors. As Christ did in His passion, Noël repeated in his life the struggle against the powers of darkness, a struggle sustained only through persevering prayer.

Despite his crucifixion of loneliness and discouragement, with the support of his superior, Father Ragueneau, and his spiritual guide, Father Pierre Chastelain, Noël carried on, day by day, as best he could, serving in whatever way he could, but always in a secondary role, in the shadow of his more successful brother missionaries. While residing at Ste-Marie, 1644 to 1645, Chabanel found innumerable tasks to keep him busy, ministering to the many needs in the European residence and the Indian compound. Was a companion needed to go to one of the missionary stations? To help in the Indian hospital, to baptize, to assist the dying, to catechize the children? Chabanel was always ready to do his humble best.

OSSOSSANÉ, MISSION OF LA CONCEPTION

In 1646 Noël was sent to the mission of the Immaculate Conception at Ossossané, called La Rochelle by the French, on Nottawasaga Bay south west of Ste-Marie. So christian was this Huron village that it was called the “believing village” by the natives. In three years time, 1649,

from this village some three hundred Huron warriors were to put up a courageous last ditch stand against a thousand Iroquois before they were eventually wiped out at the village of St. Louis. Working here under Simon le Moynes, Chabanel found a model mission well advanced in christianity. Besides, he could visit from time to time his "oasis of peace," Ste-Marie, a short distance away where he could consult with his spiritual adviser, Pierre Chastelain.

On Oct. 21, 1646 Noël pronounced his final vows as a Jesuit, promising before Paul Ragueneau the superior his "perpetual obedience in the Society of Jesus." While Chabanel was making his spiritual immolation to his Lord, unknown to him and his brothers, a mere two days before in New York State Isaac Jogues and John de la Lande had already offered their life's blood to the same Christ Noël was serving in a bloodless martyrdom. Only too soon the shadow of the cross which had already enveloped three martyrs of that glorious band of eight would reach into Huronia to claim yet five more victims for the sacrifice.

During his stay at Ossossané Noël met Charles Garnier on his way to establish a new mission, the farthest outpost, among the Petun nation about fifty miles south west of Ste-Marie. Little did Noël think that one day he would join Garnier in that mission and finally gain the coveted palm of martyrdom for which he longed and of which he deemed himself so unworthy.

BACK TO STE-MARIE

In the spring of 1647, he was recalled to Ste-Marie to help with the stream of Huron refugees who fled there panic stricken from the invading Iroquois. It was while here in June that he made his annual retreat and pronounced his heroic vow of stability in the Canadian mission. Though he did not possess the gift of the Huron tongue as did Brébeuf, though he did not have the charm to attract the Indians as did Garnier and Daniel, Noël asked but the grace to persevere till death as a helper of these holy missionaries.

From 1647 to 1648 Chabanel humbly and obediently carried out his appointed tasks both at Ste-Marie and in the various mission villages dependent on Ste-Marie. That year of 1648 the shadow of the Iroquois menace darkened the skies of Huronia. The enemy were closing in taking first the outlying missions. On July 4th, tragedy struck closer to home base. Teanaostaiaë, the mission of St. Joseph, eleven miles south east of Ste-Marie was seized and destroyed by the Iroquois. Anthony Daniel, its amiable pastor fell defending his flock. Panic spread through-

out Huronia. St. Ignace I, because of the Iroquois danger was moved closer to Ste-Marie about six miles to the east on the Sturgeon River. Brébeuf was the master builder of St. Ignace II and was put in charge of this station along with its sister mission, St. Louis, half way between the new St. Ignace II and Ste-Marie. He asked for missionary help. Father Ragueneau sent him Noël Chabanel.

AT ST. IGNACE II

In the autumn of 1648 Noël left Ste-Marie to join Brébeuf at St. Ignace. He worked with Brébeuf until February, 1649, considering it a great privilege to be associated with this giant so courageous by nature and so endowed by grace. There was work to be done that fall and winter to put the finishing touches to St. Ignace II. The weeks flew by. In February, 1649, Father Chabanel was replaced by the frail and delicate Gabriel Lalemant, a novice of but a few months in Huronia. Chabanel, more robust in health was needed in the hardy mission of the Petuns, St. Jean, to the south west near modern Stayner, to help Charles Garnier. Accustomed by now to these quick changes Noël left for his new mission post on February 17, sad to leave Brébeuf, but without a murmur.

As Noël took his last leave of Ste-Marie, his final farewell to Father Chastelain betrayed a premonition of martyrdom. "This time I hope to give myself to God once and for all and to belong to Him entirely." Shortly after, Chastelain remarked to a friend, "I have just been deeply moved. That good Father spoke to me with the look and voice of a victim offering up his sacrifice. I do not know what God has in store for him, but I can see that He wants him to be a great saint."

ST. JEAN AMONG THE PETUNS

Hardly had Noël spent a month at his new post when the shocking news reached him that the Iroquois had attacked and ravaged St. Ignace and St. Louis on March 16. Both Brébeuf and Noël's replacement Gabriel Lalemant, were martyred. In a touching letter to his Jesuit brother, Pierre, Noël wrote betraying his wistful yearning: "Father Gabriel Lalemant . . . had replaced me at the village of St. Louis just a month before his death, while I, being stronger, was sent to a more distant and more difficult mission, but one not so fertile in palms and crowns as the one for which my laxity rendered me unworthy before God." Robbed of the martyrdom he coveted when it was within his grasp! Surely this was the supreme test of his complete obedience to God's pleasure. But no, a second time this was to happen, and soon!

COLLAPSE OF HURONIA

Tragedy and complete collapse came to Huronia that fatal year, 1649. With village after village pillaged by the Iroquois, with the total breakdown of Huron morale, with the mass hysteria and exodus of the Hurons from Huronia, the Jesuit missionaries came to a painful decision: without a flock what purpose was there in their staying! On May 15, Ste-Marie, the work of ten years, was abandoned and deliberately destroyed by the missionaries themselves. They and the remnant of their sheep resettled temporarily on St. Joseph (Christian Island). The new home was called Ste-Marie II.

All fall of 1649 Chabanel labored among the Petuns with Charles Garnier at St. Jean. On December 5th., he again received orders from his superiors, this time to leave St. Jean and make his way to Christian Island. There were two reasons for this decision: first, the extreme famine conditions among the Petuns, and secondly, his superiors felt they should not expose two missionaries in this dangerous outpost.

Obedience was by now second nature to Chabanel. He bade farewell to Garnier on December 5th., and immediately headed north towards Christian Island. Two days later he learned that St. Jean had fallen to the Iroquois and that Garnier had won a martyr's crown. A second time was Chabanel cheated of martyrdom! But this time he was not to be denied for long.

The day following Garnier's death, December 8th., Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Noël Chabanel's life of "bloodless martyrdom" ended in a martyrdom of blood.

INITIAL MYSTERY SURROUNDING NOËL'S DEATH

At first the details of Noël's disappearance were vague and uncertain. But thanks to the painstaking care and precision of his chief chronicler, Paul Ragueneau, we are now able to reconstruct the sequence of events leading up to Noël's martyrdom. There are two accounts of Noël's death written by Ragueneau. The first, in the 1650 *Relation*, written shortly after Noël's disappearance, recounts his death but reveals no knowledge of the motives for the slaying. Only months later did the real story come to Ragueneau. This more accurate information was the basis of his second account.

THE FIRST ACCOUNT

The first account as given by Ragueneau in the 1650 *Relation* goes as follows. On Dec. 5th., 1649 Noël, as ordered, left St. Jean to proceed to Christian Island. On his way north he stopped at the village of St.

Matthias, a Petun mission where two Fathers, Greslon and Garreau were stationed. It was here Noël spoke his last recorded words to Father Garreau who had sailed to New France with him six years previously. On the morning of Dec. 7th., he left them accompanied by seven or eight christian Hurons. After covering a distance of six long leagues over difficult wintry roads night came upon them. While his companions slept, Noël remained awake to pray. Suddenly the silence of the night was pierced by shouts and noises. Some of these came from the victorious Iroquois who had ravaged St. Jean; some came from the prisoners taken there. Noël quickly awakened his companions who immediately scattered in flight leaving Chabanel alone. The Christians who had escaped from danger reached the Petun nation and reported that Noël tried to follow them, but when he could no longer keep up with them, fell on his knees saying: "What difference does it make if I die or not? This life does not count for much. The Iroquois cannot snatch the happiness of heaven from me."

At daybreak (December 8th.) Chabanel continued north towards his destination, Christian Island. (From this point on the testimony becomes garbled and untrustworthy, as Ragueneau suspected and was to confirm later.) One of the Hurons said he saw Father Chabanel standing on the bank of a river which lay across his path (the Nottawasaga). This witness added that he had passed Chabanel in his canoe and that he saw Noël throw away his coat, sack and blanket in order to expedite his escape. Ragueneau remarks, "Since that time we have not been able to get news of the Father. We cannot be sure how he died." He then gives three possibilities: Noël fell into the hands of the enemy who killed him; perhaps he lost his way and died of hunger and cold; or, more probably, he was killed by the Huron who was the last to see him. This man had been a Christian and had since become an apostate who was quite capable of killing Noël to rob him of his little possessions.

Ragueneau concludes his first account by saying that he felt it wiser in this time of public calamity to stifle their suspicions – their only concern being the service of God. Prudent, sober man that he was, he strongly doubted the testimony of this apostate Huron who was known to be no angel.

THE SECOND ACCOUNT

Now for the second, more informed account, of Chabanel's death, written in 1652 from Quebec. This is found in an autograph note of Paul Ragueneau, appended to the precious MS of 1652, and affirmed

under oath. This testimony clears up the first obscurity of Noël's death. Ragueneau testifies that he obtained from most trustworthy witnesses the following details. The Huron apostate named Louis Honareenhax finally publicly confessed, and even bragged that he had killed Father Noël with a hatchet blow and thrown his body in the half frozen Nottawasaga river, *out of hatred for the faith*. For, ever since he and his family had embraced the faith, all kinds of misfortunes had befallen them. These he blamed on Chabanel and in his superstition believed he had rid his people of a menace. It was also a known fact that Louis had been a trouble maker and had previously tried to stir up his tribesmen to get rid of Chabanel and Garnier.

This clear testimony made under oath by a man of Ragueneau's integrity leaves no doubt as to the real slayer of Noël and the true motivation for his crime, namely out of hatred for the faith on which he blamed all his troubles. Ragueneau himself was certain his friend Chabanel had died a martyr.

EPILOGUE

Thanks to Ragueneau the long silence shrouding the greatness of Noël Chabanel has been broken.

Only in the twentieth century is Noël Chabanel's poignant life and unique martyrdom coming to be appreciated. Like the life of the suffering Christ he served so faithfully, Noël's life seemed one of apparent failure. Noël Chabanel is the silent hero of the hard trail, a patron of misfits, patron of the lonely, disappointed and abandoned, the patron of all square pegs in round holes. In the official picture of the Martyrs, the closed book in his hand is a grim symbol of his life.

Because of Noël's heroic obedience to and generous acceptance of God's will, God, Who is never outdone in generosity, rewarded him with the glory of martyrdom. Like his Master, Noël died as he lived, a lonely man, a man in the shadows. Somewhere along the snow-covered path by the Nottawasaga river, Noël's grim trail merged into the green pastures of eternity. He was struck down in the dark night by an apostate Huron's tomahawk and his body thrown into the Nottawasaga River. There perhaps somewhere along its murky bottom lie the bodily remains of this unique man. And so at the age of thirty-six years, nineteen as a Jesuit, five as a Huron missionary, Noël Chabanel, one of the "little four" merited to be crowned a martyr and saint alongside the "big four."

Our modern world, shocked with the rapidity of constant change, needs more saints of the calibre of Noël Chabanel.

Noël Chabanel, obedient throughout life, persisted obedient unto death because he was a man of unshakable faith and persevering prayer, a man, therefore, who refused to quit in the face of overwhelming odds. The call to faith is a call to obedience, a call to adjust to the new and trying situations God is continually moving man into, a call to resist the powers of darkness that subtly tempt man to come down from the cross of his human condition. ❀

Suggested Readings

- The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, edited by Reuben Thwaites; Cleveland, Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901; 73 volumes. What we know about the martyrs of New France comes mainly from this source.
- E. J. DEVINE, S.J., *The Canadian Martyrs*; Montreal, The Canadian Messenger, 1923; 2nd edition.
- Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. I (1000-1700); Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966. This volume contains a number of good essays on the martyrs.
- ARTHUR JONES, S.J., *Old Huronia*, being the Fifth Report of *The Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario*; Toronto, 1909. This is a basic and helpful study of the history and people of Old Huronia, including the martyrs and their Jesuit confrères.
- FLORIAN LARIVIÈRE, S.J., *La Vie ardente de Saint Charles Garnier*; Montréal, Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1953.
- RENÉ LATOURELLE, S.J., *Étude sur les écrits de Saint Jean de Brébeuf*; Montréal, Les Éditions de l'Immaculée-Conception, 1952-1953; 2 volumes. This is an excellent study of the writings of Brébeuf.
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- ANGUS J. MACDOUGALL, S.J., *Brébeuf, A Giant in Huronia*; Midland, A Martyrs' Shrine Publication, 1970.
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- JOYCE MARSHALL, translator and editor, *Word from New France*, being the selected letters of Marie de l'Incarnation; Toronto, Oxford, 1967. Mère Marie de l'Incarnation was a contemporary and close friend of the martyrs and has a number of references to them in her letters.
- JOHN A. O'BRIEN, *The American Martyrs*; University of Notre Dame Press (Indiana), 1960; 2nd printing.

- FRANCIS PARKMAN, *The Jesuits in North America in the 17th Century*; Boston, Little & Brown, 1867. This is an older but interesting and lively study. Parkman has some difficulty understanding the motivation of the Jesuit blackrobes.
- LÉON POULIOT, S.J., *Les saints Martyrs canadiens*; Montréal, Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1949.
- PAUL RAGUENEAU, *Mémoires touchant les morts et les vertus des Pères Isaac Jogues, Anne de Nouë, Antoine Daniel, Jean de Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Charles Garnier, Noël Chabanel et un séculier René Goupil*; a manuscript 1652; preserved in the Jesuit Archives, Notre-Dame de Montserrat, Saint-Jérôme, Québec.
- PAUL RAGUENEAU, *Shadows over Huronia*, edited by J. S. McGivern, S.J.; Midland, A Martyrs' Shrine Publication, 1972; third printing. An English translation, with an introduction, of some of Paul Ragueneau's writings. Ragueneau (1608-1680) was the religious superior of the martyrs of New France and the chronicler of their lives.
- FRANÇOIS ROUSTANG, *Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*; Collection *Christus* no. 6; Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1961. This is a worthwhile book, with pertinent introductions and texts. It includes, for instance, all the extant letters of St. Isaac Jogues.
- FRANÇOIS ROUSTANG, *An Autobiography of Martyrdom*, translated by Sister M. Renelle, S.S.N.D.; St. Louis, Herder Book Co., 1964. This is an English translation of Roustang's *Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France*.
- FRÉDÉRIC SAINTONGE, S.J., *Martyre dans l'ombre – Saint Noël Chabanel*; Montréal, Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1958.
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- FRANCIS X. TALBOT, *Saint among the Hurons, the Life of Jean de Brébeuf*; New York, Doubleday (Image Book), 1956.
- FRANCIS X. TALBOT, *Saint among Savages, the Life of Isaac Jogues*; New York, Doubleday (Image Book), 1961.