

CELEBRATING THE NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38



Blackrobes. The title given by the Indians to the Jesuit missionaries who brought the Gospel to North America in the first decades of the 17th century.

Words strive in vain to convey to a comfortable world the virtue of the first missionaries, and to describe the difficulties confronted by these heroes desiring to implant Christianity amid the savage nations of the north. Building materials, chapel accessories, everything in effect had to be imported from France; the Indian languages were varied and difficult; customs were at best non-Christian; insects infested the woods where they dwelt; the tribes were migrant and had to be followed from place to place. There were less belligerent ones who responded rapidly to the pacifying and sanctifying influences of the Faith, but the Iroquois of the northeast were dreaded, and it was to them that the eight martyrs all fell victims, over a period of seven years. October 19 commemorates their martyrdom.

Jesuit Priests:

St. Jean de Brebeuf	+ March 16, 1649
St. Noel Chabanel	+ December 8, 1649
St. Anthony Daniel	+ July 4, 1648
St. Charles Garnier	+ December 7, 1649
St. Issac Joques	+ October 18, 1646
St. Gabriel Lalemant	+ March 17, 1649

Laymen:

St. Rene Goupil	+ September 29, 1642 (surgeon and lay apostle)
St. Jean de LaLande	+ October 19, 1646

These men had an intense devotion to Christ. This was the principle on which they based their entire existence. For them, Christ was a living presence who was always with them—in their travels, ministry, suffering and martyrdom. Like St Paul, they had been captured by Christ (Phil 3:12). For the Hurons, the missionaries were a visible expression of Christ, loving them even to the point of dying for them.



PRESENCE of GOD

We pause and remember that our loving Creator abides with us in all circumstances, in all seasons, in all our joys and sorrows, in our successes and in all our failures; wherever we go and in whatever we do. He loves us beyond our imagination and is always present to us. Glory and praise to You Creating God, Redeeming Son and Life-giving Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER

Holy Martyrs and patrons, protect this land which you have blessed by the shedding of your blood. Renew in these days our Catholic faith which you helped to establish in this new land. Bring all our fellow citizens to a knowledge and love of the faith. Make us zealous in the profession of our faith so that we may continue and perfect the work which you have begun with so much labor and suffering. Pray for our homes, for our schools, for our parishes, for vocations, for the conversion of sinners, for the return of those who have wandered from the fold, and for the perseverance of all the Faithful. Foster among us a deeper and increasing unity among all Christians. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 4: 6-12

But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

For we who live are constantly being given up to death for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

So death is at work in us, but life in you.

REFLECTION

As you read or reread the lives of these North American martyrs, you see to what length they went to adapt themselves to the Indians among whom they labored; they tried to master the language; they ate their impossible nauseating food; they inhaled their suffocating smoke and they put up with the most atrocious insults in the hope of converting at least one soul to the Master. Let us ask the North American martyrs to obtain for us something of their great love for Christ asking Jesus to give us the grace of mingling our blood with His because even though we may not shed our blood in death, we are all expected to live a holy and virtuous life always proclaiming Christ by our words and actions.



LITANY

Lord, have mercy on us!

Christ, have mercy on us!

Lord, have mercy on us!

Christ, hear us!

Christ, graciously hear us!

Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs, pray for us!

St. Isaac Jogues, pray for us!

St. John de Brébeuf, pray for us!

St. Gabriel Lalemant, pray for us!

St. Charles Garnier, pray for us!

St. Anthony Daniel, pray for us!

St. Noël Chabanel, pray for us!

St. René Goupil, pray for us!

St. John Lalande, pray for us!

**"We begged God to accept our lives and our blood and unite them
to His life and His blood for the salvation of these tribes."**

Saint Isaac Jogues, SJ

Live Jesus in our hearts.

Forever!