

Jogues arrived at Rennes, France on January 5, 1644, and presented himself at the Jesuit residence there, asking to see the Rector... The Rector welcomed the stranger with kindness and questioned him about the New World and about various Jesuits there. Finally, he asked him about Father Isaac Jogues, as there had been rumors as whether or not he was still alive. Jogues responded that he was Father Jogues. As one of the Rennes Jesuits wrote later, all the brethren regarded Jogues as a Lazarus raised from the dead. He had a profound effect on all he met. His Jesuit brethren were deeply moved at the sight of him. Even the Queen wished to meet and talk to him. For a man so conscious of his own shortcoming and indebtedness to God, all this proved extremely mortifying. Finally he desired to return to New France and live with the Hurons. He set sail in the spring of 1644 with the concurrence of his superiors. His brethren in Canada learned of Jogues' escape from the Iroquois only when he re-appeared on the St. Lawrence that June of 1644... In Canada, his superiors assigned him to ministry at the young colony of Montreal and employed him in various dealings with the Iroquois. The French were hopeful of arranging some kind of lasting peace and needed the services of a man like Jogues who was well versed in the language and the ways of the Iroquois... Finally a truce was established.

Jogues, accompanied by a young *donne* Jean de la Lande and a few Hurons, left Three Rivers on an embassy mission on September 27, 1646. At first all went well but some Iroquois they met on the way advised them that certain malcontents were all for breaking the truce and attacking the French. Jogues decided to push on. 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), announce 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... Jerome Lalemant, writing in the Relation for 1647, refers to Jogues as a true martyr. Jogues never condoned in himself the slightest aversion toward his persecutors... His obedience, extraordinary prayerfulness and deep attachment to the Blessed Sacrament were bywords with his fellow Jesuits...

It is rare for any man to suffer two martyrdoms in a single lifetime. This was Jogues' holy fate... His accomplishment, then is, 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 be three centuries before the Church officially recognized what Jogues' fellow Jesuits and friends, what so many Hurons and Algonquin's, and Iroquois as well took for granted. On June 29, 1930, at Rome, in the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, Isaac Jogues, along with Jean Brebeuf, Rene Goupil, Jean de la Lande and four others of New France, were declared martyrs and saints. * (excerpted from: www.wyandot.org)

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Saint Isaac Jogues

Feast Day: September 26



"It would be shameful that a martyr of Christ be not allowed to drink the Blood of Christ".

Pope Urban VII upon giving Isaac Jogues permission to offer Mass with his mutilated hands.

Saint Isaac Jogues

*Isaac Jogues, born in Orleans, France, 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 Fle Che 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 Brebeuf to open up another mission among the Hurons, nine hundred miles inland. This was a very difficult and demanding apostolate, yet Jogues aspired to it. The young Jesuit priest sailed from Dieppe on April 8, 1636 and eight week later arrived in Quebec on July 2, 1636.

On August 24, 1636, Jogue embarked in a canoe with five Huron's who had come to trade and were now returning to the upper country. It was a difficult journey for the new missionary unfamiliar with the Huron language. His only food for the journey was Indian corn, crushed between two stones and boiled in water without any seasoning; sleep overcame his party while they were 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 water-falls so plentiful on the Ottawa river. Yet, despite all the usual hazards of the trip, Jogues' made excellent time. They took only nineteen days to cover a distance that normally took twenty-five to thirty days. Jogues disembarked from his canoe at Ihonatiria on September 11, 1636.

After an early bout of sickness that nearly killed him, Jogues learned the Huron language and began his missionary apprenticeship. 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 center of the whole missions begun under Jerome Lalemant's direction in 1629. The apostolate among the Tobacco Indians was a completely unrewarding experience. Despite all their good will, generosity and patience, Jogues and his companions encountered nothing except hostility and minor persecution. The Tobaccos, victims of infectious diseases, blamed the blackrobes (Jesuit's) and shrank from them as from death itself. After Jogues left the Tobacco country, he ministered to the Hurons around Saint-Marie...

In 1641, at the request of his superior Jerome Lalemant, Jogues joined Father Charles Raymbaut and his Huron companions 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. It took seventeen days to reach their destination and they were warmly welcomed. They calculated that 2,000 Indians lived in the area... Because of the lateness of the season they did not linger very long at the Sault. Jogues and his companions then paddled back to Sainte-Marie, arriving in early November, 1641. The following summer, Jogues was assigned to make a trip to Three River and Quebec to procure urgently needed supplies. They set out in the middle of June, and little did Jogues realize that this would be the last time he would see his beloved Huronia.

The trip to Quebec was made without mishap. On August 1, 1642, Jogues' group, forty in number, laden with goods and supplies for the hard pressed mission, left on the return trip to Huronia. On the following day they were ambushed by the Iroquois. Most of the Hurons fled, a few were killed or captured, and Jogues and two donne's Rene' Goupil and Guillaume Couture were taken prisoners. Among the captured Hurons was Ahatsistari, the greatest of their warriors, and several other prominent Christians.

As soon as the engagement ended, the prisoners began to be tortured. In a great rage, they had finger nails ripped out, chewing their fingers and beating with clubs. They were taken to Mohaw country south of the St. Lawrence. En route they were savagely beaten and mutilated. On August 20, 1642, 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 they again were tortured. They faced: running the gauntlet, beating, cutting, whipping, burning, and scratching. This treatment continued in two other villages. Jogues was singled out for extreme cruelty since the Iroquois considered him a leader. They hacked off his left thumb and received blows to the body with a big lump of iron attached to a rope... Three Hurons were burned alive in the Mohawk villages while the elders decided to spare the lives of the French... Eventually, both Goupil and Couture were murdered while Jogues life was spared to mourn over their deaths. Treated as a slave, Jogue survived the winter and some of the elders even listened for a time to his teaching about Christianity... Jogues was often taken on various fishing trips by his Mohawk captors. In August, 1643, the group passed 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 the opportunity to escape. Jogues, anxious to follow God's will, asked for the night to pray over the decision. He weighed all the reasons for fleeing and for staying, and finally decided that it was God's will to escape... The Dutch sent Jogues to New Amsterdam (New York) and from there he went back to France.