

## The Canadian Martyrs (XVII<sup>e</sup> century)

Amongst the eight French missionaries who died as martyrs in Canada in the 17th century, six were Jesuit priests; one was a novice and the other a lay person. These men, who came from France with the desire to make known the Good News of the Gospel to the First Nations in Canada, knew they were putting their lives at risk. Because they wanted to preach the Gospel to the native people in a way that would be respectful of their culture, they had chosen to live with the Huron people, so as to learn about their lifestyle, their habits and language. They were aware of the risks, in particular that of being attacked by their enemies, the Iroquois. Several amongst them had considered and accepted the possibility of suffering martyrdom.



René Goupil arrived in Quebec in 1640 and was accompanying Father Isaac Jogues when they were attacked on the road by a group of Iroquois: the young Goupil is killed while Isaac Jogues is able to escape after being tortured. He returns to France and then comes back to New France, where a few years later (August 1646), together with Jean de la Lande, he is killed in Ossernon (Auriesville, today's state of New York). The Iroquois believed that the religion of the Jesuit Fathers (the "Blackrobes") was responsible for the sickness that had decimated their village.

Father Antoine Daniel directed, for seven years, a school for the Young Hurons. He is killed in 1648 by the Iroquois. Jean de Brébeuf, who had been the first to arrive in New France and to have lived with the Hurons, is kidnapped together with Father Gabriel Lalemant by a group of enemies and, after undergoing terrible tortures, both are killed, on March 16 and 17, 1649. Father Charles Garnier, who too had come in 1636 to serve in the mission with the Hurons, is attacked by the Iroquois and dies in 1649. At last, Father Noel Chabanel, who arrived in 1643, is killed on the road by an apostate Huron, on December 8, 1649.

The Canadian Martyrs have been canonised on June 29, 1930, by Pope Pius XI and have been declared second patrons of Canada by Pope Pius XII in 1940.

### LINK :

<http://martyrs-shrine.com/about-the-shrine/the-story-of-the-martyrs/>

### QUOTATION :

"My strength is the strength of God. In Him, I can do all things." (Gabriel Lalemant)