

Pierre Fallaize, O.M.I. (1887-1964)

Born on May 25, 1887, in Gonneville-sur-Honfleur (Calvados, France), Pierre was a pure-blooded Normand, of a family of modest peasants. He loses his father when he is seven and his mother when he is twelve. Orphaned of father and mother, he is taken up by his uncles and attends the local school in Honfleur. He enters the minor seminary of Lisieux in 1899.

After doing his military service and upon being discharged, he applies to enter the Missionary Oblates and, without awaiting a reply, presents himself at Bestin (Belgium) to begin his novitiate on December 8, 1906. He makes his first vows on December 25, 1907 and is ordained a priest on July 7, 1912.



The following year, he is sent to the polar missions. He stays seven years in Fort Résolution, a village of 400 inhabitants on the *Grand Lac des Esclaves*. In 1920 he volunteers to join Fr Frapsauce on the north shore of the *Grand Lac de l'Ours*, where in 1913 two other brothers had been killed by the Eskimos. After travelling 600 km in the snow once he arrives, he discovers that Fr Frapsauce had drowned the day before. Fr Fallaize is left alone and in very difficult conditions. Though he decides to stay and devotes himself to the evangelisation of the Eskimos. He shares their lifestyle and walks for hours to search for food (almost only raw meat).

He then settles in Coppermine, a residential mission on the glacial Artic Ocean. In 1931, at the age of 44, he is appointed and ordained bishop of Mackenzie where he will remain till 1939. Then, almost totally blind, he returns to France and spends twenty years serving as a confessor for the Carmelites and the many pilgrims of the basilica of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus in Lisieux. In his old age, he lets himself be seduced by missionary nostalgia and decides to go back to the North Pole where he dies three years later, in Fort Smith, on 10 August 1964. The Eskimos called him "Inúk Ilaranaikor" (the man who never gets angry).

QUOTATION : "To be a saint is the only way to reach souls, it is the easiest. The religious and missionaries may do good to the souls as long as they are completely united to Christ. Our labors are useless and our successes even less, if we aren't first of all men and women of God."

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