

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

STANDING WITNESS

By Sr. Bernie Inocencio, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, and Gospel

*"Hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love for all the holy ones, I do not cease giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him.** May the **eyes of your hearts be enlightened**, that you may know **what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe**, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ. ..."*

EPHESIANS 1:15-20

"When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place—What is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?"

*"I tell you, **everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God.** But whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. ... When they take you before synagogues and before rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what your defense will be or about what you are to say. **For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say.**"*

LUKE 12:8-9, 11-12

Reflection

Today, we commemorate the eight missionaries "who ventured into the unknown to serve God and the Church. These missionaries carried their crosses into new lands, adapting their ministry to meet unforeseen circumstances."¹

John de Brébeuf (Jean de Brébeuf, 1593-1649) was the first Jesuit missionary in Huronia (1626) and an expert in the Indian language. He founded mission outposts, converted thousands to the faith, and inspired many Jesuits to volunteer for the missions of New France. Massive in body, gentle in character, with the heart of a giant, he was known as the apostle of the Hurons. Brebeuf went to Huronia in 1626. His missionary efforts were cut short when he was sent back to France after the French and English ended their war. An English blockade had kept the French from resupplying the colony, so Brébeuf took 20 canoes loaded with grain to Quebec on July 17, 1629. Two days after he arrived, the French capitulated and he was expatriated with other missionaries to France. He went back to Huronia in the summer of 1634, where they were "welcomed back, delighted that he had kept his word." In 1635, he and Father Daniel "worked with children during the day and adults at night. After a year, they had baptized 12 people -- four infants and eight adults -- just as they were dying. When Father Isaac Jogues arrived in 1636, a smallpox epidemic broke out among the Jesuits and their helpers and then spread to the Hurons. The epidemic lasted all winter; during that time, the Jesuits baptized more than 1,000 people, all at the point of death. Some Hurons accused the Jesuits of causing the epidemic in order to make conversions." ² Fr. Brebeuf was one of the two Jesuits tortured and ultimately killed. Amid his torture, he continued encouraging his fellow Christians to remain strong. This angered his tormentors so much that they tortured him even more. He died at 46 after spending 20 years in New France.

Isaac Jogues (1607-1646) became well known in France when he returned after escaping from slavery among the Mohawks in Canada with his hands badly mutilated from torture. Despite his sufferings, he returned to the missions where he was eventually martyred. During the winter and spring of 1642, Jogues prepared neophytes at Sainte-Marie for baptism on Holy Saturday; one of the 120 adult converts was Ahtsistari, the tribe's greatest war chief. Although the French missionary felt contented that Christianity was beginning to take root, he wanted to convert the whole Huron nation and offered himself in prayer as a sacrifice to make that happen. The Mohawks in Ossernenon had suffered a crop failure and an epidemic, blaming it on the chest of vestments and books that the Jesuit had left behind him when he visited them as French ambassador. Warriors set out in search of some Frenchmen to kill and were delighted when on October 17 they captured Jogues and his two companions. The captives were beaten on their way back to Ossernenon.³ Fr. Isaac Jogues was tomahawked and beheaded in 1646.⁴

As I read the horrifying yet inspiring account of the martyrdom of these eight martyrs, I cannot help but feel that their time and our time have some resemblance to each other. These days we are plagued by violence: gun violence, racism, verbal attacks, sexual assaults, harassment, conflicts, hatred, war. The call to stand witness to a God who ever teaches that Love prevails is always present. We are all children of God, beloved by God, given the wisdom and knowledge of Truth. We are to claim that love and acknowledge the love of God and Jesus that made us heirs of the kin-dom.

Let us ask God to continue to bless us with the grace to be open to new challenges, to have the courage and perseverance to stand up against adversities and adversaries, and to love with compassion and mercy those who surround us.

1. Excerpts from Jesuit High School website, Mass for the Feast of the North American Martyrs
 2. Excerpts from Jesuits Global website, **Saint John De Brebeuf**
 3. Excerpts from Jesuits Global website, **Saint Isaac Jogues**
 4. **Excerpt from Franciscan Media website**
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The North American Martyrs

Courtesy of www.jesuihighschool.org/ministry/mass-feast-north-american-martyrs

For Pondering

- What values can you learn from the stories of Frs. Jean Brebeuf and Isaac Jorges? How can you apply these values in your life?
- How can you witness to God's love in your life?

For Prayer

*Dear Jesus,
I acknowledge that through You
I come to know the Father,
And that I have inheritance through Your power.
Grant that I may ever see light with the eyes of my heart;
That I may know hope, courage, and perseverance
Amidst adversities and adversaries;
And that I may remember that all things are in Your care.
Amen.*

Meet the Authors

**Join us Sunday morning, October 27,
for a fun gathering with the writers of our Daily Reflections!**

Learn how each writer decides on the format and content of their reflections, how writing reflections impacts their own spiritual lives, and how YOU can create reflections for yourself and the people you care about. A light brunch buffet will be served.

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