

# Priest's of the Week



**St. Isaac Jogues  
(1607-1646)  
Martyr**

Isaac Jogues and his companions were the first martyrs of the North American continent officially recognized by the Church. As a young Jesuit, Isaac Jogues, a man of learning and culture, taught literature in France. He gave up that career to work among the Huron Indians in the New World, and in 1636 he and

his companions, under the leadership of John de Brébeuf, arrived in Quebec. The Hurons were constantly warred upon by the Iroquois, and in a few years Father Jogues was captured by the Iroquois and imprisoned for 13 months. His letters and journals tell how he and his companions were led from village to village, how they were beaten, tortured and forced to watch as their Huron converts were mangled and killed.

An unexpected chance for escape came to Isaac Jogues through the Dutch, and he returned to France, bearing the marks of his sufferings. Several fingers had been cut, chewed or burnt off. Pope Urban VIII gave his permission to offer Mass with his mutilated hands: "It would be shameful that a martyr of Christ be not allowed to drink the Blood of Christ". Welcomed home as a hero, Father Jogues might have sat back, thanked God for his safe return and died peacefully in his homeland. But his zeal led him back once

more to the fulfillment of his dreams. In a few months he sailed for his missions among the Hurons.

In 1646 he offered his services to the missionaries, set out for Iroquois country in the belief that a recently signed peace treaty would be observed. They were captured by a Mohawk war party, and on October 18 Father Jogues was tomahawked and beheaded.



**St. John De Brebeuf  
(1593-1649)  
Martyr**

Jean de Brébeuf was a French Jesuit who came to Canada at the age of 32 and labored there for 24 years. He went back to France when the English captured Quebec (1629) and expelled the Jesuits, but returned to his missions four years later. Although medicine men blamed the Jesuits for a smallpox epidemic among the Hurons, Jean remained with them.

He composed catechisms and a dictionary in Huron, and saw 7,000 converted before his death. He was captured by the Iroquois and died after four hours of extreme torture at Sainte Marie, near Georgian Bay, Canada.