



Saint Isaac Jogues

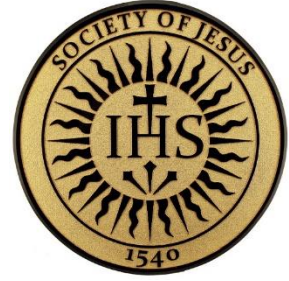
Feast Day: October 19

Born: January 10, 1607

Died: October 18, 1646

Canonized: June 29, 1930 by Pope Pius XI

Patron: North America



Isaac Jogues was born in Orleans, France on January 10, 1607. He was a professor of literature and an athlete.

At age 17, Isaac joined the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) founded by St. Ignatius. He was ordained in 1636. He read the stories of missionaries who brought the Gospel to remote parts of the world. He was particularly inspired by Bl. Carlo Spinola who was martyred in Japan and always kept his picture with him.

St. Isaac Jogues was sent to Quebec to join Fr. Brebeuf evangelizing to the native Huron tribe. He arrived very sick and the illness spread to the natives and other missionaries. The Hurons, angry that the Jesuits brought disease, were ready to rise up against them. It was challenging to impress upon the Hurons a need to be *spiritually* healed and not just physically healed. Fr. Isaac spent six years with the Hurons and converted a great number. He became a favorite among the natives who were impressed with his endurance.

The aggressive Mohawk tribe of the Iroquois were constantly warring upon the Huron. The Huron's needed supplies but were afraid to traverse trading grounds because of the strong Iroquois presence. St. Isaac, along with other volunteers made the journey. On their return trip, they were attacked by Mohawks and held captive for over a year. They were paraded around villages and tortured publicly. St. Isaac encouraged the Christian Hurons to forgive their captors and offer their suffering to God. Isaac was forced to watch his friends be tortured and killed. Isaac's thumb and some of his fingers had been cut, burned or chewed off. The Mohawks were amazed at the torture Isaac could endure and called him "the indomitable one." He was the last one standing with the help of an elderly Mohawk woman who called him her "nephew." She helped Isaac escape when the Dutch came to trade. Upon their return to Europe, the Dutch brought Isaac back to his native France.

In France, Isaac had to get special dispensation to offer Mass since his hands were mangled. Pope Urban VIII considered Isaac to be more worthy to hold the Host with his remaining fingers since he had suffered so much for Christ. After only a few months, Isaac sailed back to North America to be among the Hurons.

All were amazed that Isaac survived and then chose to return. St. Isaac learned that the Iroquois and Hurons began to make peace. He helped to negotiate an exchange of prisoners. Isaac and another Jesuit were invited to speak with the Mohawks. Though dangerous, they chose to go. As soon as they arrived, they were brutally tomahawked to death. It is said that a Mohawk involved in his murder was so impressed by the teachings, bravery and endurance of St. Isaac that he converted and took his name at Baptism. Soon after, he was murdered by fellow Mohawks. A Jesuit remarked, "God willing, there are now two Isaac Jogues in Heaven."

Isaac Jogues was canonized by Pope Pius XI on June 29, 1930 along with seven other North American martyrs.

“Our single endeavor should be to give ourselves to the work and to be faithful to Him.” ~St. Isaac Jogues