

Spiritual Work of Mercy

Bear Wrongs Patiently

(A Meditation on the Spiritual Work of Mercy, Bear Wrongs Patiently)
excerpts from Msgr. Charles Pope – June 1, 2015

Catechism of the Catholic Church

“The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aide of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently.” - (2447)

Sacred Scripture

“You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” (Matthew 5:38-41)



St. Isaac Jogues
1607 – 1646
Feast Day – October 19

Here is perhaps the most revolutionary of the Spiritual works of mercy. It is the one tied most directly to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. To decide to bear wrongs patiently is nothing less than to declare a revolution and to wage a very paradoxical counteroffensive against this world and its economy of anger.

There is a cycle of violence and retribution in which the devil seeks to engage us. The cycle begins with one person harming or slighting another, perhaps tempted to do so by the devil or by the world or flesh, manipulated by him. And then, the harm having been worked, the victim retaliates and escalates. Through such cycles, he is able to bring down friendships, families, cultures, and nations. Indeed, world wars can set much of the planet ablaze.

Into this economy, this cycle of violence and retribution, the Christian who bears wrongs patiently engages in the revolutionary act of saying, even if on a small scale, “the cycle of violence, anger, and retribution ends with me.” It is like throwing a wrench into the gears of Satan’s economy. Even if it is just the bearing of very small wrongs, it slows the machine of hatred and retribution, and causes the economy of Satan to grind more slowly.

It is the same paradox we see on the Cross, where Christ won by bearing patiently and bravely the venom, hatred, and violence of this world to the end. He bore it, not opening His mouth, not retaliating, not hating, but loving and enduring unto the end. The Cross is a huge wrench cast into the gears of Satan’s economy. Every Christian who bears wrongs patiently increases the size of that Cross by the fact that Christ unites our sufferings to His.

Note the logic of this revolution: darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that; hatred cannot drive out hatred, only love can do that; pride cannot drive out pride, only humility can do that. And thus Jesus, and every Christian who bears wrongs patiently, drives out darkness by light, hatred by love, and pride by humility. It is nothing short of a revolution, a cry of civil disobedience in a regime that demands escalation and further retribution.

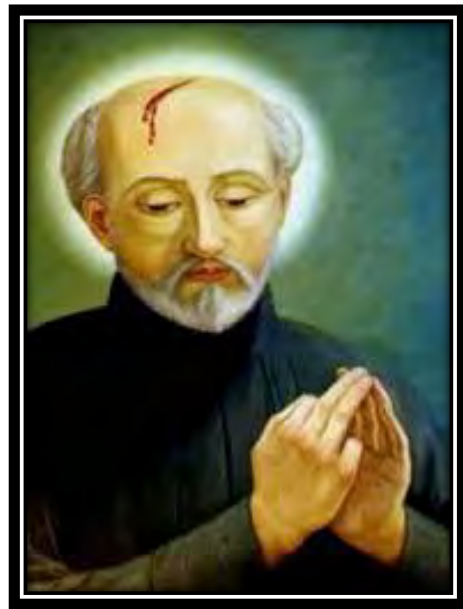
“These tortures are very great, but God is still greater, and immense.” – St. Isaac Jogues

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St. Isaac Jogues

Fast Facts:

Born	• January 10, 1607 in Orleans, France
Feast Day	• October 19
Canonized	• June 29, 1930 by Pope Pius XI
Patron Saint	• Canada



His Life:

ST. ISAAC JOGUES AND THE NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS **THE SAINTS BOOK By Kate Dooley, O.P.**

St. Isaac Jogues and his seven companions were the first martyrs of the North American continent.

Isaac was born in Orleans, France. He entered the Society of Jesus, and after his ordination he was sent as a missionary to Canada, assigned to work among the Huron Indians. The Huron tribe was frequently attacked by the Iroquois. During one of these attacks, Isaac and many of the Hurons were captured.

The Iroquois were a savage tribe and they treated their captives in a most cruel way. Isaac and his companions were dragged from village to village. They were beaten and tortured and made to watch their Huron converts being put to death. Isaac finally was ransomed and was able to escape to New York and then to return to his home in France. The Iroquois had cut, chewed or burned off several of his fingers, so he was no longer able to say Mass, but Pope Urban VIII gave him special permission to offer Mass, and that gave him great joy.

After a few months, Isaac and a companion, Jean de Lalande, sailed for the mission among the Hurons and resumed their work. Then he was asked to try to make peace with the Iroquois. He started on this peace mission but he was captured by a Mohawk war party, tomahawked and beheaded. His companion, Jean Lalande, was beheaded the next day.

The first of the missionaries to be martyred was Reno Goupil, a layman like Lalande, who had offered his services to the missionaries. While a captive, he was killed by an Iroquois who saw him trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of some children. John de Brébeuf (1593-1649) was a French Jesuit who had served among the Indians for many years. He taught the Huron language to all the new missionaries, wrote catechisms, and saw seven thousand Hurons profess their belief in Jesus before his death. He was captured by the Iroquois and suffered a most cruel and inhuman death. Father Gabriel Lalemant (1610-1649) had taken a fourth vow—that of devoting his life to the work of a missionary. He had been in the missions less than three years as an assistant to Father Brébeuf before suffering with him the same dreadful death. Father Anthony Daniel (1601-1648) was also killed by the Iroquois on July 4, 1648. As the Iroquois suddenly attacked the Mission of St. Joseph, Father Anthony baptized as many catechumens as possible. Then he ran to the cabins of the old and sick to baptize them. Going back to the church, he was surrounded by Iroquois, and they shot their arrows into him. Afterward his body was thrown into the chapel which was then set on fire. Father Charles Garnier (1605-1649) was shot to death during an Iroquois attack on the Petun village of St. John, and Father Noel Chabanel (1613-1649) was killed by a Huron who hated Christians.

These martyrs were men of great faith and heroism. They brought the teachings of the Lord Jesus to the primitive Indians of seventeenth-century America. Their only thought was to teach the Indian people about God's love for them, even though they knew that martyrdom would be their reward.

St. Isaac Jogues was born in 1607 and died in 1646. His feast day is celebrated on October 19.

THE SAINTS BOOK By Kate Dooley, O.P.

Practices to Foster growth in Bearing Wrongs Patiently

- **Read a passage of Scripture that give examples of *To Bear Wrongs Patiently*. Re-read the passage and pick a word or phrase that stood out for you.**
 - Matthew 5: 38-48
 - Luke 6: 27-36
 - 1 Peter 2:18-19
 - Ephesians 4:32
- **Pray the prayer of Christ on the Cross.**
 - When we struggle to forgive others or to bear wrongs patiently, we simply need to look at the cross to know it is possible to forgive even the most terrible injustices that others commit against us. Christ, fully human, felt all the emotions we feel. And yet, as He hung painfully, dying on the cross, He prayed, ***“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”*** (Luke 23:34) Through this simple prayer He showed us how we should react when we too are wrongly punished, ridiculed, or blamed.
- **Catechetical Texts that speak to *Bear Wrongs Patiently*:**
 - Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies. "The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself.
 - The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: "charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (CCC 1825)
 - The *fruits* of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity." (CCC 1832)
 - Fortitude is exercised in the active struggles with dangers and difficulties, while Patience is the passive acceptance of what is hard to bear. Our Lord on the Cross practiced Fortitude by freely and fearlessly meeting death to purchase our forgiveness; He practiced Patience by passively accepting the Father's will. Being God He could have stepped down from the Cross...But He willed to accept death. To give us an example: "Not my will, but Thine be done" (The Seven Virtues, Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen, pp. 20, 21.)
- **Name some people from the Bible or saints who lived out the Spiritual Work of Mercy, *To Bear Wrongs Patiently*.**
 - Examples: (St. Paul, St. Bernadette, St. Therese of Lisieux, etc.)
- **Ask the Lord how he is calling you to live out the Spiritual Work of Mercy, *To Bear Wrongs Patiently*?**