

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week, on Saturday, October 19th, the Church will celebrate the Memorial of Sts. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, Priests, and Companions, Martyrs. It is also the Month of the Holy Rosary. Since this is the case, it only seems fitting that I bring to your attention the ‘Our Lady of Martyrs Shrine’ in Auriesville, NY. The saying, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,” has a literal meaning there.

This Shrine, a mere two-and-a-half-hour drive from here, is built where a 17th century Mohawk village used to thrive and where three Jesuit missionaries, Sts. John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, and René Goupil were martyred during the 1640s. It also happens to be the birthplace of St. Kateri Tekakwitha in 1656.

I encourage you to make a pilgrimage to this shrine and learn the history. It is a great place to pass Faith to family members! I have visited twice as a seminarian and am always impressed to learn more about the lives of these saints and the Faith God gave them which enabled them to give up even their lives for Him. The martyrs always witness to us that adult Faith is real and possible. The following is an excerpt from ‘The spiritual diaries of St. John de Brébeuf’ from the Office of Readings for this Memorial.

“For two days now I have experienced a great desire to be a martyr and to endure all the torments the martyrs suffered.

Jesus, my Lord and Savior, what can I give you in return for all the favors you have first conferred on me? I will take from your hand the cup of your sufferings and call on your name. I vow before your eternal Father and the Holy Spirit, before your most holy Mother and her most chaste spouse, before the angels, apostles and martyrs, before my blessed fathers Saint Ignatius and Saint Francis Xavier – in truth I vow to you, Jesus my Savior, that as far as I have the strength I will never fail to accept the grace of martyrdom, if some day you in your infinite mercy should offer it to me, your most unworthy servant.

I bind myself in this way so that for the rest of my life I will have neither permission nor freedom to refuse opportunities of dying and shedding my blood for you, unless at a particular juncture I should consider it more suitable for your glory to act otherwise at that time. Further, I bind myself to this so that, on receiving the blow of death, I shall accept it from your hands with the fullest delight and joy of spirit. For this reason, my beloved Jesus, and because of the surging joy which moves me, here and now I offer my blood and body and life. May I die only for you, if you will grant me this grace, since you willingly died for me. Let me so live that you may grant me the gift of such a happy death. In this way, my God and Savior, I will take from your hand the cup of your sufferings and call on your name: Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!

My God, it grieves me greatly that you are not known, that in this savage wilderness all have not been converted to you, that sin has not been driven from it. My God, even if all the brutal tortures which prisoners in this region must endure should fall on me, I offer myself most willingly to them and I alone shall suffer them all.”

Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Jason'.