

A Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In the Faculty of History of
The University of Oxford

THE RHETORIC OF MARTYRDOM
IN THE JESUIT RELATIONS OF NEW FRANCE, 1632-1650

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Trinity Term 2015

SHORT ABSTRACT

The Rhetoric of Martyrdom in the *Jesuit Relations* of New France, 1632-1650

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This thesis identifies in the *Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France* (*Relations*), written between 1632 and 1650, a comprehensive rhetoric of total self-offering to Jesus Christ, a *rhetoric of martyrdom*, rooted in their authors' particular experience of the Christian tradition, their praying with the *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) of Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), their encounters with the spirituality of the French Jesuit Louis Lallemant (1578-1635), and their exposure to various forms of Jesuit mission literature from around the world. Published annually, these *Relations* were the only consistent account of the unfolding French colonial project in *Nouvelle-France*, and a popular read among the *noblesse*, ecclesiastics, and pious Christians of the kingdom. Today they form an essential collection of primary sources that continue to provide a doorway into the earliest days of Canada's history. Identifying this rhetoric throughout the narratives, this study endeavours to provide a deeper historical understanding of these *Relations* by contextualising their content within the particular all-encompassing religious worldview of the authors who wrote them.

The religious imaginations of these Jesuit authors, Paul Le Jeune (1591-1664), Jean de Brébeuf (1593-1649), François-Joseph Le Mercier (1604-90), Barthélemy Vimont (1594-1667), Jérôme Lalemant (1593-1673), Isaac Jogues (1607-1673) and Paul Ragueneau (1608-1680), thus gives birth to a rhetoric in the *Relations* that presents *Nouvelle-France* as a land filled with Amerindian peoples who would only truly embrace Christianity if all of the missionaries lovingly offer their lives to Jesus Christ; just as He had done for the salvation of the entire world from sin and evil. They do so by placing their efforts on a metaphysical plane. There, the missionaries are presented as having been invited by God to join Christ crucified on a mission into a land filled with suffering and death. Where the Amerindians they evangelise must choose between a barbarous life of selfish material interest that is thought to imbue their traditions and a more human life of self-offering modelled on the Christian God. At the same time Satan, the devil, labours hard not to lose his grip on a part of the world that was as yet unaware of its true divine origins.

The 'divine', the 'missionary', 'Satan', and the 'Amerindians', locked in this cosmic battle for souls that can only be won through a self-sacrificing union with Jesus Christ, combine to form the rhetoric of martyrdom in the narratives that reaches its summit as the authors describe the murders of eight of their fallen comrades, tortured and killed by some of the very people they had come to evangelise. This rhetoric, present throughout the narratives, has yet to be acknowledged, analysed, and interpreted by historians. In doing so, it is hoped that this study will deepen any reading of the *Relations*, advancing our understanding of their full import for both the early modern and the present-day reader.

LONG ABSTRACT**The Rhetoric of Martyrdom in the *Jesuit Relations* of New France,
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Over the past some hundred years, the historiography of the *Relations de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France (Relations)* has been abundant. Canadian, American, and some French historians, have identified its origins, composed official biographies of both its authors, and various persons to whom it refers, studied its socio-political and economic context in seventeenth-century European affairs, and continue to consult it regularly in their attempts to articulate an early history of North America. Historians of ecclesiastical history have depended on its content, as have procurators of various causes for canonisation in the Roman Catholic Church. Academics of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), and their colleagues, have applied the text to their historical and theological study of 'missions', of anthropology, of global epistolary inter-textuality, 'mysticism', and Jesuit life in the early modern period. While anthropologists and historians interested in Amerindian culture, have combed its pages in an attempt to reconstruct the original essence of languages and cultures that have long since been altered by developments in colonialism. Yet, despite the fact that these *Jesuit Relations* were exclusively written by Jesuits, there is no single work of an historian that provides an in-depth examination of how the particular religious worldview of these authors may have shaped their experiences, observations, reflections, behaviour and, subsequently the monographs that they produced. In other words, these texts have been studied as an example of the early modern 'travel narrative' or as 'ethnographic description', or even as hagiography,

but have never been taken as a whole, to be an example of early modern French devotional literature; as texts where history and piety meet on the page. This is a serious deficiency that this study hopes to remedy somewhat with the identification in the *Relations* of, what this author calls, the *rhetoric of martyrdom*.

A close examination of the particular rhetoric used in the twenty-one volumes published between 1632 and 1650 reveals an overarching theme rooted in the authors' experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) of Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), namely: of following Jesus Christ to his Cross, of loving self-sacrifice for Christ, and of martyrdom. This theme comes together in four principal sets of *dramatis personae*, present throughout the *Jesuit Relations*: 'God', the 'missionaries', the 'devil' and his demons, and the 'Amerindian peoples'. God, is praised as the model of self-sacrificing love in Jesus Christ, and is the one who invites the missionary to suffer in the New World for the sake of the Amerindian peoples. It is God who is said to provide opportunities for both the missionary and the Amerindian to suffer, and is thought to be the mission's protector. The missionaries, who nobly accept their divine call to New France, sacrifice much in doing so, and understand their daily sufferings as occasions of metaphysical benefit for all. These men consistently articulate in the *Relations* their ardent beliefs that it is in their lovingly offering themselves to God, in life and in death, that evangelisation will take hold. The devil, and his demons, is thought to rule over Amerindian life subversively and maliciously. He is thought to labour at keeping Amerindians ignorant of Christ, and is regularly blamed for many of the obstacles that the missionaries face. While the Amerindians, the '*sauvages*', are thought to sit in the midst of this cosmic battle. Recognised by the missionaries as divinely created human beings to be evangelised, they are nonetheless often described as behaving in less than human ways, since they lack knowledge of

the God, who is considered by the missionaries to be the true model of human life. In this, as it were, ‘spiritual condition’, their rituals, their regular rejection of the missionaries, their torture of the same, and indeed their conversions, are all seen in this light.

This rhetoric of martyrdom is therefore not a religious idea to be eschewed in the historian’s attempt to mine the *Relations*, but is rather a dominant worldview that shaped the missionaries’ entire experience and, as such, shaped their writing. In this study, we shall begin, in the first chapter, with an examination of the texts and contexts that appear to have shaped this view in the monograms, paying particular attention to the *Spiritual Exercises*, other Jesuit texts and schools of spirituality from their authors’ period in France, Sacred Scripture, various devotional materials, and their authors’ readership. We shall then systematically examine each of the four sets of characters mentioned earlier. Beginning, in chapter two, with ‘God’ and the ‘missionaries’, we shall examine the early Christian roots of self-sacrificing love for Christ in Sacred Scripture, the early Christian martyrdom accounts, their integration in mediaeval Christian theology, and how suffering for God came to be understood by notable Catholic theologians in early modern France. We shall then closely study the particularly Jesuit experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* and of self-sacrifice, ‘annihilation’, vows of sacrifice, penance, suffering, and Louis Lallemant’s (1578-1635) school of spirituality that shaped it. Finally we will examine in detail how this religious worldview formed the core rhetoric of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in the *Relations*.

In chapter three, we will turn our attention to Satan, who was considered by the authors to be their principle opponent in *Nouvelle-France*, and thereby the source of much suffering among the missionaries. After briefly examining the idea of Satan,

as it developed throughout Christian history, we will see how in France itself, the Jesuit authors were exposed to the idea that the devil was everywhere among possessed religious and laity, in witchcraft, in the machinations of foreign powers bent on conquering France, and among Satan's 'friends', the Huguenots. Through their own understanding of the devil from the *Spiritual Exercises*, we will see how the authors understood their efforts in *Nouvelle-France* as a cosmic battle for the souls of Amerindian peoples - where God hoped for their salvation through baptism, whilst the devil laboured unceasingly to prevent it. The devil's efforts are not only said to have burdened both the missionaries and Christian converts with greater sufferings (i.e. indignation, disease, famines, wars, and torture), but also the authors repeatedly state that only the willingness of missionaries to suffer, as Christ did, would defeat him. Once again, the missionaries understand both their struggles, and the final act against their enemy, to be rooted in self-sacrificing love.

In chapter four, the authors' perception of the Amerindians is examined in light of this same religious worldview. We begin by tracing the origins of the terms 'barbarian' and 'savage' in western thought, then see how this idea moved through the mediaeval imagination of the Church, and continued, amidst impassioned debates, during the early modern period. Then, turning to the *Relations*, we shall see that the '*sauvages*', although understood by the authors as human persons, are often thought to lack the fullness of their humanity, since it was considered impossible to achieve such a state without baptism. Interestingly, the authors identify this belief by highlighting Amerindian behaviours and traditions as ultimately self-centred, vengeful, cruel, and arrogant; qualities that one can possess in direct opposition to the disposition of self-offering espoused by the missionaries. This distinction between self-centredness and self-offering, rooted in the religious worldview of the authors,

manifests itself in a particular rhetorical device, where the Amerindians are neutrally identified as '*sauvages*', yet, when they behave in ways that one author describes as 'less of the human' (i.e. stealing, concupiscence, killing, consuming human flesh, or ritualistically torturing another person), they are called '*barbares*'. This device consistent throughout the texts, and again contrasts the idea of Jesus Christ, self-sacrifice, and the fullness of human identity with the devil, selfishness, and inhumanity. As we shall see, it is within this context that the authors understand the role of the Amerindians in the killing of their comrades, who are martyrs thought to offer their lives generously at the hands of so called selfish men and women who were unwittingly guided by the temptations of the devil. A selfish act of violence, answered with a selfless act of love.

In chapter five, we shall take these various aspects of the rhetoric of martyrdom held by the authors, and relate them to the accounts of martyrdom included in the later years of 1644, 1647, 1649, and 1650. These eight accounts, each utilising the various rhetorical forms found throughout the narratives, provide what must have been considered a series of climactic events that affirmed the authors' belief in suffering and death with Christ as the ultimate means of conversion. In doing so, we shall not only further define the rhetoric of martyrdom found throughout the texts, but also provide a deeper interpretation of the martyrdom accounts themselves.

While historians have correctly looked to the *Relations* as a source of early colonial history in Canada, or as a detailed account of the country's earliest ecclesiastical history, or again as an anthropological source for understanding Amerindian cultures, this study recognises the monographs as also being an important example of early modern French devotional literature. At the centre of these texts is the authors' devotion to God, a devotion that is marked by a particular personal desire

to suffer with Him. As such, the very journey to the New World, the trials faced and the few successes that followed, are all articulated through this viewpoint. Opposition is understood to reflect a divine battle between God and Satan that can only be won through self-sacrificing love. The plight of the Amerindian people is described as the result of not being baptised, while their culture, though in many ways admired by the authors, is ultimately seen to be self-centred, and only to be transformed by the example of Christ's particular model of self-offering love. These characters in the narrative, how their exploits are described, and the designations provided them, form the substance of the rhetoric of martyrdom that permeates all of the texts. This is a rhetoric that cannot be ignored by any historian who approaches the *Relations*, since it provides a hermeneutical key to their reading. This study focuses upon this point, and examines how this fact is made manifest in the authors' various accounts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Rev Dr Antoni Üçerler, S.J. and Dr Nicholas Davidson, my doctoral supervisors. Both men, experts in their respective fields, offered essential support throughout this undertaking, diligently reading my work with exacting insight, and contributing enormously to my advancement both as a student and an historian of early modern New France.

I am also thankful for the support of my Jesuit *confrères* at Campion Hall, most especially the Master, the Rev Dr James Hanvey, S.J., who modelled for me a healthy way of balancing religious and academic life in a way that might be fruitful to my vocation, while at the same time, provided me the necessary support to complete this thesis; the Rev Dr Scott Hendrickson, S.J. whose long-standing and devoted friendship made my transition into life in Oxford a joy; the Rev Professor Jack Mahoney, S.J., who has served as an insightful reader of this thesis, the Rev Gerard Ryan, S.J., and all of my fellow Jesuit graduate students, for their constant companionship.

I would also like to acknowledge the following historians for their continued support of my academic work: Dr Catherine Holmes, for her mentoring during my tutorial training programme; Mr Robin Briggs, the Rev Dr Sarah Foot, and Dr Richard J. Parish, for their advice as I began my research; Dr Lyndal Roper for leading my transfer and confirmation process, and Dr Ian W. Archer for his oversight in the Faculty of History.

A note of gratitude also goes out to the numerous librarians and archivists who helped me in my research at the following places: The Bodleian Library, the Taylorian Institution, Campion Hall Library, Christ Church Library, and the Codrington Library (All Souls College), all in Oxford University, the Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome, the reading room of the Réserve des livres rares, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Montréal, and the Kirishitan Bunko Library of Sophia University, Tokyo.

I am also happily indebted beyond measure to the Society of Jesus in Canada and all of its members who granted me the opportunity to undertake doctoral studies, funded them, and thereby blessed my religious life with the opportunity to serve the people of God with the knowledge I have gained from this enterprise.

And finally, I dedicate this thesis to my mother Mrs Pearl Knox whose great love and unwavering support has made me much of who I am today, and to the Rev Dr Jacques Monet, S.J. who, for the past seventeen years, has been an invaluable academic advisor, spiritual director, and friend, teaching me most of what I know about Jesuit history, as well as introducing me to St Jean de Brébeuf and his companions.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Natural and Moral History</i>	José de Acosta, <i>Natural and Moral History of the Indies</i>
Brébeuf, <i>Hurons</i> (1635)	Jean de Brébeuf, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé aux Hurons, en l'année 1635</i>
Brébeuf, <i>Hurons</i> (1636)	Jean de Brébeuf, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé dans le pays des Hurons en l'année 1636</i>
CSJ	<i>Constitutions of the Society of Jesus</i>
<i>Histoire Littéraire</i>	Henri Bremond, <i>Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France: Depuis la fin des Guerres de Religions jusqu'à à Nos Jours</i>
<i>Imitatio</i>	<i>Imitatio Christi</i> , Thomas À Kempis
Lalemant, <i>Hurons</i> (1638-39)	Jérôme Lalemant, <i>Relation de l'employ des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus qui sont aux Hurons, païs de la Nouvelle-France, depuis le mois de juin 1638 jusques au mois de juin 1639</i>
Lalemant, <i>Hurons</i> (1639)	Jérôme Lalemant, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission des Hurons, depuis le mois de juin de l'an 1639 jusques au mois de juin de l'année 1640</i>
Lalemant, <i>Hurons</i> (1640)	Jérôme Lalemant, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable en la mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus aux Hurons, Pays de la Nouvelle-France, depuis le de juin de l'année mil six cens quarante jusques au mois de juin de l'année 1641</i>
Lalemant, <i>Hurons</i> (1641)	Jérôme Lalemant, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission des Hurons depuis le mois de juin de l'année 1641 jusques au mois de juin de l'année 1642</i>
Lalemant, <i>Hurons</i> (1642)	Jérôme Lalemant, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable en la mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus aux Hurons, païs de la Nouvelle-</i>

France, depuis le mois de juin de l'année 1642 jusqu' au mois de juin de l'année 1643

- Lalemant, *Hurons* (1645-1646) Jérôme Lalemant, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable és mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus en la Nouvelle-France és années 1645 et 1646*
- Lalemant, *Hurons* (1647) Jérôme Lalemant, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable és mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus en la Nouvelle-France, sur le grand fleuve de Saint-Laurens, en l'année 1647*
- Lalemant, *Hurons* (1647-1648) Jérôme Lalemant, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable és mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus en la Nouvelle-France, és années 1647 et 1648*
- Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632) Paul Le Jeune, *Briève Relations du voyage de la Nouvelle-France fait au mois d'avril par le Père Paul Le Jeune de la Compagnie de Jésus*
- Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633) Paul Le Jeune *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France en l'année 1633*
- Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634) Paul Le Jeune, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1634*
- Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635) Paul Le Jeune, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1635*
- Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636) Paul Le Jeune, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1636*
- Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637) Paul Le Jeune, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1637*

Le Jeune, <i>Nouvelle-France</i> (1638)	Paul Le Jeune, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1638</i>
Le Jeune, <i>Nouvelle-France</i> (1639)	Paul Le Jeune, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1639</i>
Le Jeune, <i>Nouvelle-France</i> (1640)	Paul Le Jeune, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1640</i>
Le Jeune, <i>Nouvelle-France</i> (1640-1641)	Paul Le Jeune, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France ès années 1640 et 1641</i>
Le Mercier, <i>Hurons</i> (1637)	François-Joseph Le Mercier, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission de la Compagnie de Jésus au pays des Hurons en l'année 1637</i>
Le Mercier, <i>Hurons</i> (1637-1638)	François-Joseph Le Mercier, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission de la Compagnie de Jésus au pays des Hurons en l'année 1637 et 1638</i>
Ragueneau, <i>Hurons</i> (1647-1648)	Paul Ragueneau, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus aux Hurons, pays de la Nouvelle-France, ès années 1647 et 1648</i>
Ragueneau, <i>Hurons</i> (1648-1649)	Paul Ragueneau, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus aux Hurons, pays de la Nouvelle-France, ès années 1648 et 1649</i>
Ragueneau, <i>Hurons</i> (1649-1650)	Paul Ragueneau, <i>Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la mission des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus aux Hurons, et aux païs plus bas de la Nouvelle-France, depuis l'esté de l'année 1649 jusques à l'esté de l'année 1650</i>
<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Ratio Studiorum Societatis Iesu</i>
<i>SE</i>	Ignatius Loyola, <i>The Spiritual Exercises</i>

- SD* *The Spiritual Doctrine of Father Louis Lallemant of the Society of Jesus*
- Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642) Barthélemy Vimont, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France ès l'année 1642*
- Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642-1643) Barthélemy Vimont, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1642 et 1643*
- Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643-1644) Barthélemy Vimont, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France ès années 1643 et 1644.*
- Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1644-1645) Barthélemy Vimont, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France ès années 1644 et 1645*

INTRODUCTION

*The winds of God were blowing over France, kindling the hearths and altars,
changing vows of rote into an alphabet of flame.*

– E.J. Pratt¹

In the winter of 1649, while encamped in a vast forest with a small band of Christian Amerindians, the French Jesuit missionary Noel Chabanel (1613–1649) was awoken in the night by the war-song of an approaching band of Iroquois warriors. He aroused his party at once, and they stumbled together in darkness, through snow and thicket, to make their escape. Falling to his knees with exhaustion, the priest urged his fellow-travellers to keep on running without him, for ‘It matters not that I die; this life is a very small consideration. Of the blessedness of paradise, the Iroquois can never rob me’!² Left alone in the wilderness, Chabanel was either lost to the elements or murdered. He had given his last breath to ensure that his fellow Christians had a chance at safety; his body disappeared without a trace into the landscape of history.

The desperation of Chabanel’s final hours illustrates the seemingly insurmountable circumstances faced by all the French involved in establishing the colony that King Francis I (1494–1547) had declared *la Nouvelle-France* (1608). Three months from France by ship, some three million square miles in size, filled

¹ Edwin John Pratt, *Brébeuf and his Brethren* (Toronto, 1940), p. 1.

² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 57. All quotations from the *Relations Jésuites* (between 1632 and 1650) have been translated from the original editions gathered and transcribed by the historian Lucien Campeau in his *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, after consulting the scanned copies made available online by the Canadian Institute for Historical Reproductions, Ottawa (www.canadiana.ca), the full series in the rare book collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, the editions in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the best existing English version produced by Reuben Gold Thwaites. Cf. Lucien Campeau (ed.), *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, 9 vols (Rome, 1967–87); Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries among the Indians of Canada and the Northern and North-Western States of the United States, 1610–1791*, 73 vols (Cleveland, 1896–1901).

with hundreds of thousands of Amerindians who formed unique individual cultures such as the Wendat (Hurons), Iroquois, Algonquin, Montagnais, Neutrals, Petuns and Ottawas, in 1640 *Nouvelle-France* had a European population of only three hundred and fifty-six, twenty-nine of whom were members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).³ Despite the promise of great wealth from the valuable fur trade and of a new life in a new land, the colony was in a constant state of struggle. The climate was harsh to French sensibilities, wars with the Iroquois Nation lasted throughout the seventeenth century, and immigration to the colony was very slow in coming.⁴ All the while, in France, the hopes of Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642), Chief Minister to the king and self-appointed Grand-Master of Navigation, for great colonial expansion were dashed as the royal coffers emptied and the nation faced the constant threat of war with the Habsburgs' great empire.⁵

The mission of the Jesuit order in *Nouvelle-France* had itself from the very beginning faced constant difficulty. In 1611, Pierre Biard (1567-1622) and Énnemond Masse (1575-1646) arrived at Port Royal to evangelise the Amerindian peoples alongside the Franciscan missionaries (Récollets) but, captured by the English only two years later, they were quickly returned to France. Then again, in 1625, Masse landed at the colony of Québec with Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649), Charles Lalemant (1587-1674), François Charton (1593-1697) and Gilbert Burel (1585-1661) but, with the English conquest of *Nouvelle-France* in 1627, the Jesuits were officially banished

³ W. J. Eccles, *Essays on New France* (Toronto, 1987), p. 28; James S. Friders, *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts* (Scarborough, 1993), pp. 37-42; cf. *Liste des missionnaires Jésuites: Nouvelle-France et Louisiane, 1611–1800* (Montreal, 1929).

⁴ Philip P. Boucher, *Les Nouvelles Frances: France in America, 1500–1815, An Imperial Perspective* (Providence, 1989), p. 27.

⁵ Boucher, *Les Nouvelles France*, pp. 24–26.

from the lands.⁶ Finally, with the territories once again under French control, Paul Le Jeune (1591-1664) and seven companions re-established the mission in 1632.

As Jacques Monet outlines, their task was threefold: to familiarise themselves with the diverse peoples, places, and languages of their new mission field; to build up support for their work in France; and to evangelise the Amerindian peoples.⁷ The result of these efforts was indeed extensive and, between 1632 and 1650, involved forty Jesuits. Dictionaries, catechism, and music in various Amerindian languages along with the discovery of new peoples and places were to follow. Indeed, it has been said that, in early French America, ‘not a cape was turned, nor a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way’.⁸ In 1639, a principle mission was established at the centre of the Hurons (Wendat) Nation that by 1648 housed twenty-three Jesuits, a forge, gardens, a hospital, and accommodations for visiting Amerindian Christians, whilst its priests maintained seven mission churches spread out around it.⁹ Though no detailed record remains of the number of baptisms during this period, in 1642 it was reported that 120 *Hurons* embraced the faith in that year alone.¹⁰

Unlike Chabanel, some men and woman lived to tell the tale of these exploits, and their accounts add much to our understanding of these early days of Canadian history.¹¹ Among these are the writings of the Jesuits who in 1632 began formally to publish their annual letters, chronicling *sur place* the fruits of their efforts. The letters

⁶ Jacques Monet, ‘The Jesuits in New France’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* ed. by Thomas Worcester (Cambridge, 2008), p. 186.

⁷ Monet, ‘The Jesuits in New France’, pp. 187-90.

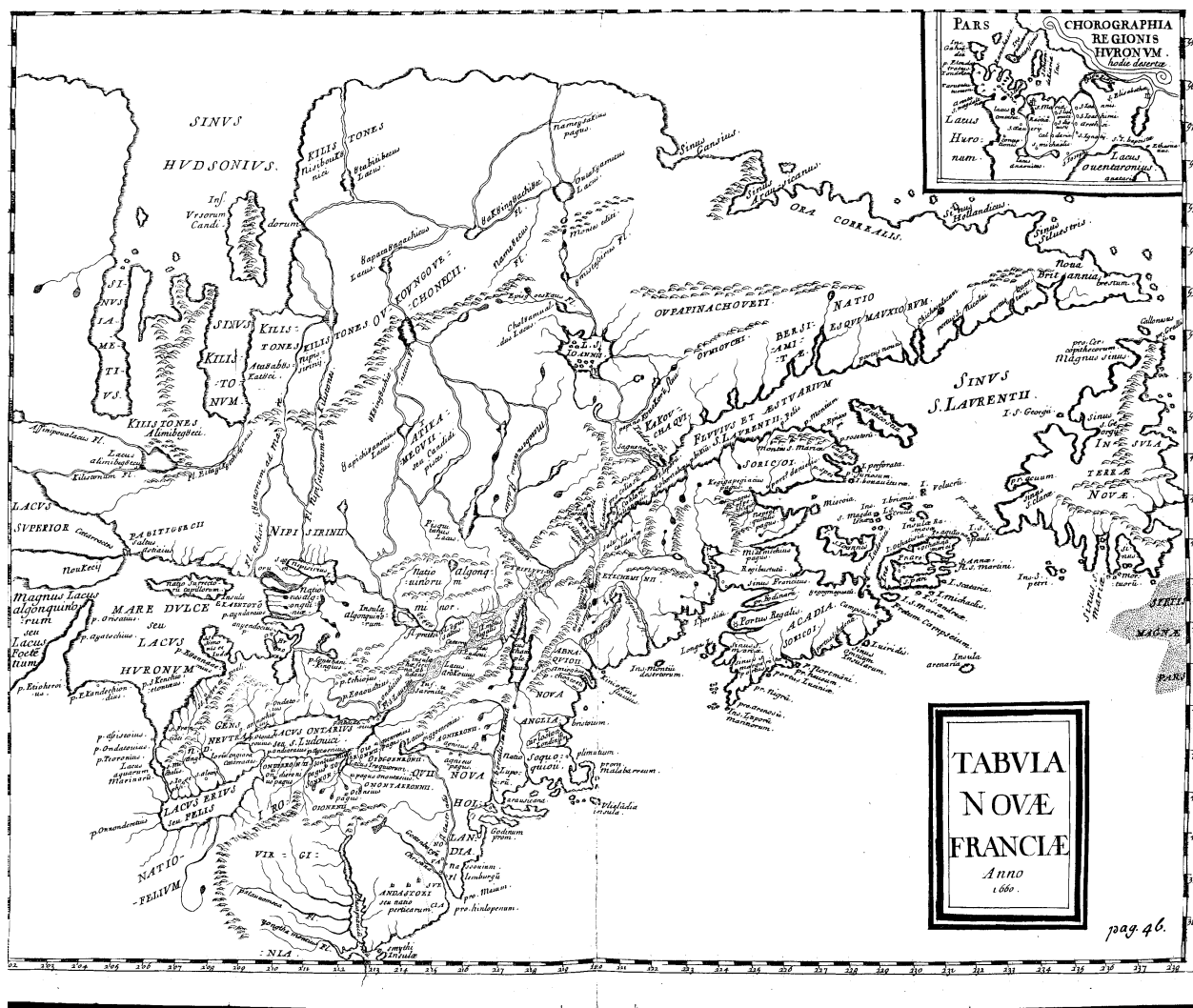
⁸ George Bancroft, *History of the United States* (London, 1891), III, p. 783.

⁹ Lucien Compeau, *The Jesuit Mission Among the Hurons, 1634-1650*, trans. by William Lonc *et al* (Bridgetown, 2000), pp. 85-100.

¹⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1642), p. 14.

¹¹ E.g. Antoine Biet, *Voyage de la France equinoxiale en l’isle de Cayenne* (Paris, 1564); Marc Lecomte, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris, 1611); Samuel de Champlain, *Les Voyages de la Nouvelle France occidentale, dicte Canada, depuis l’an 1603 jusques en l’an 1629* (Paris, 1632); Gabriel Sager, *Le Grand voyage du pays des Hurons* (Paris, 1632); Gabriel Sagar, *Histoire du Canada et voyages que les Frère Mineurs Recollet y on faiets pour la conversion des infidelles* (Paris, 1636); Pierre François-Xavier Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France*, 3 vols

were sent by ship to France, edited by the Jesuit's Provincial Superior, and then printed in Paris by the influential publisher to the king, Sébastien Cramoisy (1585-1669).



Novae Franciae Accurata Delineatio (1657): This map of *Nouvelle-France*, first published in Italy, and attributed to Jesuit missionary François-Joseph Bressani (1612-72) – the only Italian to serve in the early Canadian mission field – was inserted by François du Crux into his *Historia Canadensis* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1664). Courtesy of the Bodleian Library.

As we shall see, these *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle (Relations)* form a part of the larger letter writing tradition of the Jesuit order developed to ensure

(Paris, 1744); Mary Dunn (ed.), *From Mother to Son: The Selected Letters of Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin* (New York, 2014).

that its vastly dispersed members remain united in mind and heart.¹² Yet, as letters written for a broader audience than the order's hierarchy, written not only to inform their readership of its apostolic labours, but also to inspire and edify them, the *Relations* are more akin to the *Litterae Annuae* mandated by the secretary of the Jesuit order Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517-76) in 1547.

As Mark Friedrich suggests distinguishing the content and purpose of the *Litterae Annuae* and mission letters such as the *Relations* can be troublesome. Both are produced annually. Both tend to present the deeds of individual Jesuits rather than an account of the state of the mission as a whole. Both avoid meditative expositions of theological discourse choosing instead to edify their readers by illustrating the every-day deeds of their *confrères*. And both often present to their prospective readerships examples of miraculous encounters with the divine as well as struggles with evil forces that seek to foil the efforts of God. Indeed he concludes that in both *genres* 'Exhortation, self-fashioning, and specific information about concrete situations and events go hand in hand'.¹³

Nevertheless, unlike the *Litterae Annuae*, which were published in Latin, and largely meant for a Jesuit audience, the *Relations*, written in French, were composed for a broader readership and, as we shall see, were in fact widely read in France by lay and religious alike. Where the *Litterae Annuae* are brief and highly poignant accounts of apostolic labours, each of the *Relations* are well over two hundred pages in length, and much more detailed. Furthermore, beyond the intended scope of the *Litterae Annuae*, these publications, produced between 1632 and 1673, became an essential project of the French colony, as the Jesuits took a leading role in promoting not only their own efforts at Christian evangelization, but also those of the French Crown,

¹² John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 7-10.

¹³ Markus Friedrich, 'Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*: Towards A History of the Jesuit System of Communication' in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 153 (2008), pp. 3-41, (p. 6).

encouraging their readership to offer financial support, to consider settlement, and to pray for the colony's overall success. Moreover, unlike accounts presented in the *Litterae Annuae*, the pages of the *Relations* are also filled with detailed ethnographical, geographical, horticultural and even astronomical facts about the 'New World', and provide detailed accounts of colonial life.

Indeed, for over three centuries, Canadian historical research has relied heavily on the *Relations*. They have been closely studied as examples of the early modern travel narrative, as ethnographic description and propaganda, or as sources of hagiographical material documenting the religious experiences of the characters they present. Despite the fact, however that they were written by Jesuits who claimed to be inspired by religious motivations, no historian has provided an in-depth examination of how their particular religious worldview affected the way in which they attempted to articulate their often turbulent and dangerous circumstances.¹⁴ They have, in other

¹⁴ Though a series of historians, anthropologists, biographers, bibliophiles and translators have relied upon the *Relations* in writing early histories of New France, the French colonial project in North America, spiritual biographies, descriptions of early Amerindian societies, and even religious studies of early modern spirituality in Canada, their analysis of these sources does not include a detailed analysis of how the religious worldview of its authors shaped their form and content. See: François Du Creux, *The History of Canada or New France*, trans. James B. Conacher (Toronto, 1951), p. 15; Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France*; Louis Étienne Dussieux, *Le Canada sous la domination française* (Paris, 1855); Jean-Baptiste Ferland, *Cours d'histoire du Canada*, 2 vols (Québec, 1861–65); Michel-Étienne Faillon, *Histoire de la colonie française en Canada*, 3 vols (Ville-Marie, 1865–66); Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America* (Boston and Toronto, 1867), pp. 95–101, 101–29, 146–58, 188–200, 305–44; Narcisse Eutrop Dionne, *La Nouvelle-France de Cartier à Champlain*, 2 vols (Québec, 1891); Camille de Rochemonteix, *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France*, 3 vols (Paris, 1895); Émile Eugène Guénin, *Historie de la colonisation française: La Nouvelle-France*, 2 vols (Paris, 1896); Gustave Lanctot, *Histoire du Canada*, 3 vols (Montréal, 1960–63); James C. McCoy, *Jesuit Relations of Canada, 1632–1673: A Bibliography* (New York, 1937); Léon Pouliot, *Étude sur les Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, 1940), pp. 214–22; John Hopkins Kennedy, *Jesuit and Savage in New France* (New Haven; London, 1950), pp. 6–19, 80–96, 78–80, 82; Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, 1963); René Latourelle, *Écrits de Saint Jean de Brébeuf* (Montréal, 1952), pp. 192–201; Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French–Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1976), pp. 18, 24, 32. Bruce Trigger, *Children of Aataensic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montreal, 1976), pp. 469–70; Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: The Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton, 1984), pp. 27–84, 251–70; John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto; London, 1984), pp. 5, 11, 32, 44; Paul Perron, 'Isaac Jogues: From Martyrdom to Sainthood', in Allan Greer *et al.*, *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas* (New York; London, 2003), pp. 153–54; Julia Boss, 'Writing a Relic: The Use of Hagiography in New France', in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas*, p. 223; Carol Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and*

words, never studied the *Relations* as an example of early modern French devotional literature — as texts where history and the piety of their authors co-mingle on the page.

Yet in his masterful work entitled *Brébeuf and his Brethren*, in which Edwin John Pratt (1882–1964) renders in verse the lives of eight murdered missionaries in *Nouvelle-France* who believed it was necessary to give up their lives for their faith, the Canadian poet presents precisely this conjunction.¹⁵ Pratt here places the principal motivation of these martyrs within the *domaine spirituelle* of early modern France. He identifies a ‘wind of God’ that passed over their religious imaginations, one that enkindled the letter of their religious ideals into an ‘alphabet of flame’ written upon their hearts, composed not by the pen alone but by their efforts to live profoundly what their experiences of their God revealed to them. Pratt expresses the religious worldview of these missionaries, and suggests that it was, above all, their faith that shaped their identities, their efforts in the New World, and their willingness to offer their lives for what they believed.

Though these eight men occupy a particularly dramatic place in the earliest days of French-Canadian history, they were not alone. Our detailed knowledge of their endeavours comes mostly from their religious superiors in *Nouvelle-France*

Colonialism in North America 1632–1650 (Montreal, 2004), pp. 123–26; Karen Anderson, *Chain Her by One Foot: The Subjugation of Women in Seventeenth-Century New France* (London; New York, 1991), pp. 22, 43; Lucien Campeau, *The Jesuit Mission among the Hurons*, trans. by William Lonc (Bridgetown, 2000), p. iii; Nicholas P. Cushner, *Why Have You Come Here?: The Jesuits and the First Evangelization of Native America* (New York, 2006), pp. 22–24; François Roustang, *Jesuit Missionaries to North America*, trans. M. Renelle (San Francisco, 2006), pp. 44–46; Takeo Abé, *The Jesuit Mission to New France: A New Interpretation in the Light of the Earlier Jesuit Experience in Japan* (Leiden; Boston, 2011), pp. 34–35; Micah True, ‘Travel Writing, Ethnography, and the Colony-Centric Voyage of the Jesuit Relations from New France’, *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 42.1 (2012); Emma Anderson, *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs* (Cambridge, MA; London, 2013.), pp. 20–21; Vincent Siret, ‘Les martyrs canadiens: l’apostolat crucifié’, in Thérèse Nadeau-Lacour (ed.), *Au nom d’une passion: l’évangélisation dans le coeur des saints*, (Perpignan, 2013), pp. 143–57; Timothy C. Pearson, *Becoming Holy in Early Canada* (Montreal and Kingston, 2014), pp. 8, 43–44.

¹⁵ Isaac Jogues (1607–46), Antoine Daniel (1601–48), Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649), Gabriel Lalemant (1610–49), Noël Chabanel (1613–49) and Charles Garnier (1606–49), as well as two lay companions, René Goupil (1608–42) and Jean de Lalande (d. 1646).

who, between 1632 and 1650, composed the *Relations*: Paul Le Jeune, Jean de Brébeuf, Jérôme Lalemant (1593–1673), Barthélemy Vimont (1594–1667), François-Joseph Le Mercier (1604–90), Isaac Jogues (1607-46), and Paul Ragueneau (1608–1680). It should be noted that each of these seven authors had unique identities and experiences that distinguish them from one another. Le Jeune is the only author whose parents were *Huguenots* (Calvinist) and he a convert. He is set apart as the most educated among the authors of the *Relations*, the most articulate and, as its first author, the one who set its general structure and tone.¹⁶ Having laboured in *Nouvelle-France* before the English conquest, Brébeuf was the veteran missionary among the authors who had lived among the Amerindian people the longest and had all but mastered several of their languages. Furthermore, as René Latourelle argues, the religious imagination of the Jesuit included unique mystical encounters with the divine that influenced his writings.¹⁷ Whereas Vimont – considered to have been more of a practical man – arrived to the mission having been responsible for managing the finances of the Jesuit’s college in Eu, France.¹⁸ Lalemant’s experience was in leadership having already served in France as Rector (superior) of Jesuit colleges in Blois and Clermont.¹⁹ Though both Le Mercier and Ragueneau had both served as professors in France before their arrival to the New World, the former taught philosophy at Clermont and the later theology in Bourges.²⁰ Finally, as we shall see, Jogues’ greatest distinction from the other authors lies in the

¹⁶ Léon Pouliot, *Études sur les Relations des Jésuites* (Montréal, 1940), pp. 18.

¹⁷ René Latourelle, *Jean de Brébeuf* (Montreal, 1999), pp. 275-91.

¹⁸ Honorius Provost, ‘Barthélemy Vimont’, in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1 (Toronto and Quebec City, 1966).

¹⁹ E. R. Adair, ‘France and the beginnings of New France’, *Canadian Historical Review*, xxv (1944), pp. 246–78; Léon Pouliot, ‘Jérôme Lalemant’, in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1 (Toronto and Quebec City, 1966).

²⁰ Lucien Campeau, ‘François-Joseph Le Mercier’, in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1 (Toronto and Quebec City, 1966); Léon Pouliot, ‘Paul Ragueneau’ in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1 (Toronto and Quebec City, 1966); Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America* (Boston and Toronto, 1867), pp. 102-9; Lucien Campeau, *The Jesuit Mission among the Hurons*, trans. by William Lonc (Bridgetown, 2000), p. 57.

fact that his contributions to the *Relations* came in the form of letters written while a prisoner of the Iroquois as he suffered extraordinary degradation, torture, and the constant fear of death.

And yet, while Jogues and Brébeuf were themselves eventually killed, all these authors shared with the martyrs, and among themselves, the same religious formation in France, made the same radical choice to undertake a mission to the New World, toiled alongside them amidst great adversity, and chronicled in their annual letters the evangelical efforts of the Jesuit missionaries and their lay workers. In these accounts, the authors wove together, over eighteen years, a common narrative meant to articulate the purpose of their evangelical mission among the Amerindian peoples, to outline their objectives and methods, to share their successes and failures, and to testify to the level of personal sacrifice they believed necessary to achieve their goals. As descriptions written by Catholic priests of their missionary efforts to propagate faith in Jesus Christ, the *Relations* were written both for their *confrères* and for interested Christians in their homeland. It would thereby seem logical to extend Pratt's metaphor and to conclude that the 'winds of God' passed no less over these authors than over their celebrated companions who suffered death; and that what they wrote in the *Relations* was imbued with the same religious worldview.

As we shall see in this study, a close reading of twenty-one volumes of the *Relations* shows that they were written in what E. J. Pratt described as an 'alphabet of flames', or what I identify as a *rhetoric of martyrdom*. This rhetoric, which touches every aspect of the accounts, conveys the religious conviction that to be a true companion of Jesus Christ, joined with him in love, is to share willingly in his suffering and to participate mystically in his continuing mission to save the world

from sin and eternal damnation. This conviction inspired the authors to honour their fallen comrades as great witnesses to the Christian faith.

More importantly, however, this study reveals that the same conviction establishes the religious landscape in the *Relations*. The rhetoric of martyrdom is consistently employed to present *Nouvelle-France* as a land filled with suffering, to explain the spiritual disorder the authors identified in the Amerindian peoples, to draw meaning from the trials and opposition the missionaries suffered while attempting to evangelize, and to reveal the mystical purpose that their deaths might serve. It is, as it were, an expression of the authors' particular terms of engagement with these sufferings.

This rhetoric is omnipresent within the narratives, shaping the way in which every observation is described and every action explained. As we shall see, it is rooted in both the authors' experience of praying with the *Spiritual Exercises* (1522–24) of Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) and their early religious formation in France, either under the direction of, or inspired by, the Jesuit spiritual master Louis Lallemant (1578–1635). The former took them on a profound meditative journey with Christ in which they were asked to consider 'what I ought to do and suffer with him',²¹ while the latter instilled in them the absolute importance of living out this obligation with a profound authenticity manifested in a life devoted totally to prayer, self-annihilation and adherence to the will of God, even when faced with enormous personal sacrifice. The life and writings of Louis Lallemant were made all the more relevant by his clear indication that *Nouvelle-France* was indeed the best place for the authors to live out their life of service.²²

²¹ *SE*, [197].

²² *SD*, p. 8.

This study intends, therefore, to deepen our understanding of the *Relations*. Its principal point of divergence from earlier historical works is in the effort not to relegate the religious life of the missionaries merely to a series of intellectual ideas that informed the way they wrote about their experiences. Rather, I suggest that their ongoing religious experience was a dynamic one; it continuously shaped their entire perception of the world. It was, in fact, their affective desire to be with God that guided their intellectual understanding and thereby gave meaning to their particular rhetoric of martyrdom. This rhetoric is not, therefore, merely a religious manner to be cast aside as unworthy of study in the historian's attempt to mine the narratives for information. It is, instead, an expression of the dominant religious worldview that shaped the missionaries' entire experience and, as such, needs to be both identified and understood so that scholars might more effectively utilize the *Relations* in their study of history.

Although the production of the *Relations* spans forty-one years in all, in order to accentuate the degree to which the rhetoric of martyrdom permeates the literature, this study will focus on the writings composed between 1632 and 1650. The reason for choosing to end the study with the account of 1650 is twofold. First, a concrete historical relationship exists among the seven authors writing over the previous eighteen years, in that all of them had either direct or indirect exposure to Louis Lallemant and his particular school of spirituality. They thus together form a body of authors who shared the same religious imagination established by their spiritual master.

Second, the *Relations* of 1642–43, 1647, 1648–49 and 1649–50 include detailed descriptions of the torture and death of Jogues (1642–43 and 1647), Goupil (1642–43), Lalande (1647), Daniel (1648–49), Brébeuf (1649–50), Lalemant (1649–

50), Chabanel (1649–50) and Garnier (1649–50). The authors' religious disposition to offer themselves fully to their God, articulated in the rhetoric of martyrdom throughout the texts, thus comes to a real and actualized climax. The content of these particular necrologies and, in particular, the way their authors describe the deaths of their *confrères*, serve as prime and heightened examples of the rhetoric employed throughout these writings.

This rhetoric of martyrdom, forged by the religious experience of the authors, is governed by and interplays with four principal relationships in the narratives — God, the missionaries, the Devil and his demons, and the Amerindian peoples — through whom a sacred drama is played out across the vast expanses of *Nouvelle-France*. God is praised as the model of self-sacrificing love in Jesus Christ, and is presented as the one who invited the missionaries to suffer in the New World for the sake of the Amerindian peoples. It is God who is said to have provided opportunities for both the missionary and the Amerindian to suffer, though he is also thought to be the mission's protector. The missionaries, who accepted their divine call to *Nouvelle-France* and sacrificed much in doing so, understand their daily sufferings as occasions of metaphysical benefit for all. They consistently offer themselves to God, in life and in death, so that their evangelical labours may succeed. The Devil and his demons are thought to rule subversively and maliciously over Amerindian life. Satan labours to keep the Amerindians ignorant of Christ, and is regularly blamed in the texts for many of the obstacles faced by the missionaries. The Amerindians are thought to sit in the midst of this cosmic battle. Recognized as divinely created human beings to be evangelized, they are nonetheless often described in the texts as behaving in less than human ways, since they lack knowledge of Christ, who is considered by the missionaries to be the true model of human life. Furthermore, aware that the

Amerindians have never before been inclined to follow Christ crucified, the authors take particular note of their perceived selfish behaviour that threatens to bring them to great ruin. Many of their rituals, their so-called sorcery, their regular rejection and torture of the missionaries, and indeed the importance of their conversion, are all seen in this soteriological light.

I shall begin in the first chapter with a general introduction to the *Relations*, paying particular attention to indications of how they were written and for whom, how they were published, and how their editions vary. Subsequently, I shall mine from the texts the various sources and contexts that appear to have provided much of the substance that shaped their rhetoric of martyrdom. I shall then examine each of the four principal characters mentioned earlier. Beginning with ‘God’ and the ‘Missionary’ in chapter two, I shall survey the early Christian roots of self-sacrificing love for Christ in Sacred Scripture, their integration into medieval Christian theology, and how suffering for God came to be understood by notable Catholic mystics and theologians in early modern France. I shall then study the particularly Jesuit understanding of self-sacrifice found in the *Exercices*, and how ‘annihilation’, vows of sacrifice, penance and suffering, shaped for the authors of the *Relations* by their close association with Louis Lallemant. Finally in this chapter, I shall examine in detail how this religious worldview formed the core rhetoric of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in the *Relations* themselves.

In chapter three, I shall turn my attention to Satan, who was considered by the authors to be their principal opponent in *Nouvelle-France* and the source of much suffering among the missionaries. After briefly studying the idea of Satan as it developed throughout Christian history, I shall show how, in France itself, the Jesuit authors were exposed to the idea that the Devil was everywhere, among possessed

religious and laity, in witchcraft, in the machinations of foreign powers bent on conquering France, and among Satan's 'friends', the Huguenots. Through their own understanding of the Devil from the *Exercices*, I shall show how the authors saw their efforts in *Nouvelle-France* as a cosmic battle for the souls of the Amerindian peoples, in which God hoped for their salvation through baptism, and the Devil laboured unceasingly to prevent it. The Devil's efforts were said to have burdened both the missionaries and Christian converts with greater sufferings (disease, famines, persecutions, wars and torture); but the authors also repeatedly state that only the willingness of missionaries to suffer, as Christ did, could defeat him. Once again, the missionaries understand their struggles and the final act against their enemy to be rooted in self-sacrificing love.

In chapter four, the missionaries' perception of the Amerindians is examined in light of this same religious worldview. I begin by tracing the origins of the terms 'barbarian' and 'savage' in Western thought, then show how this idea moved through the medieval imagination of the Church and continued, amidst impassioned debates, into the early modern period. Turning to the *Relations*, I shall look at how the 'sauvages', understood by the authors as human persons, were often thought to lack the fullness of their humanity, since it was considered impossible to achieve such a state without special union with Jesus Christ in baptism. Interestingly, the authors mark this belief by highlighting Amerindian behaviours and traditions as ultimately self-centred, vengeful, cruel and arrogant: qualities that can be placed in direct opposition to the religious disposition of self-offering espoused by the missionaries. This opposition between self-centredness and self-offering, rooted in the religious worldview of the authors, manifests itself in a particular aspect of the rhetoric of martyrdom. The Amerindians are neutrally identified as *sauvages*; yet, when they

behave in ways that one author describes as ‘less than human’ (stealing, concupiscence, killing, consuming human flesh or ritualistically torturing another person), they are called *barbares*. This verbal device is consistent throughout the texts, and again juxtaposes the ideas of self-sacrifice and the fullness of human identity with those of the Devil, selfishness and inhumanity. It is within this context that the authors understand the role of the Amerindians in the killing of their comrades — martyrs thought to have generously offered their lives to the selfish men who were unwittingly guided by Satan to take them. A selfish act of violence was thus answered with a selfless act of love.

In chapter five, I shall uncover the presence of this rhetoric in the eight detailed accounts of martyrdom included in the reports of 1642-3, 1647, 1649 and 1650. These accounts utilize the rhetorical forms found throughout the narratives in what must have been considered the climactic events affirming the authors’ belief in suffering and death with Christ as the ultimate stage of conversion. In these accounts, we shall see how they apply the same rhetoric of martyrdom found throughout the narrative. The authors describe these events as the will of God, as perfect examples of abnegation and self-annihilation that unite the martyrs all the more to Christ crucified. The places where they were tortured and killed become a battlefield located on a metaphysical plane, where Satan uses the selfish dispositions he has kindled in the ‘*barbares*’ to eliminate the missionaries who had come to share their belief in Jesus Christ. But it was also a place where the Christian faith shone most brightly, when these men responded to the violence inflicted upon them by offering themselves completely to God.

While historians have correctly seen the *Relations* as a source for the early colonial history of Canada, as a detailed account of the country’s earliest

ecclesiastical history, and as an anthropological source for understanding Amerindian cultures, this study recognizes the texts as an important example of early modern French devotional literature. At their centre is the authors' devotion to their God, a devotion that is marked by a particular desire to suffer with him. Their journey to the New World, the trials they faced and the few successes that followed are all articulated through this view. Opposition is understood to reflect a divine battle between God and Satan that can only be won through self-sacrificing love. The plight of the Amerindian peoples is seen as a product of their not being baptized, and their culture, though in many ways admirable, is described as self-centred, to be transformed by the example of Christ's model of self-offering love. These characters in the narrative and the way their exploits are described embody the rhetoric of martyrdom that permeates all the texts — a rhetoric that cannot be ignored by any historian who approaches the *Relations*. In fact, it provides the hermeneutical key to their understanding and interpretation.

CHAPTER ONE

The Texts and Contexts of the Rhetoric of Martyrdom in the *Relation*

1. Introduction

In the introduction to his collections of studies of early modern Jesuit mission literature, Antoni Üçerler observed that ‘Besides a story to tell, every book also has a story behind it’, and the *Relations* hold true to his conclusion.¹ It would be impossible to suggest that the authors of these accounts chronicled their observations of *Nouvelle-France* from a purely objective standpoint, detached from their life experience or without particular purpose in mind. My purpose in this study has been to focus as much as possible upon the particular *religious* worldview that shaped the authors’ observations and, in effect, did much to guide their quills along the paper. In this process, a red thread has become evident, a central principle of faith that each man held: that lovingly offering one’s whole life to God, even unto death, is both the truest manifestation of the Christian life in this world and the surest way to salvation in the next. This fundamental belief forms, throughout the *Relations*, a perceivable rhetoric of martyrdom and reveals, on a fundamental level, something of the authors’ religious experience of God, their sense of purpose in *Nouvelle-France*, their committed efforts among the Amerindian peoples and their continued willingness to accept discomfort, set-backs, rejection, calumny, fear for their lives and — for eight missionaries during the period of our study — deaths, all with apparent joy.

The rhetoric of martyrdom within the *Relations* is derived from the various texts and contexts that shaped the authors’ religious formation in France. Some of these are mentioned in the narratives directly, while others must be inferred, based

¹ Antoni J. Üçerler (ed.), *Christianity and Cultures: Japan and China in Comparison 1543–1644*, (Rome, 2009), p. 1.

upon a sense of what they were exposed to in their training at that time. This study has identified seven principal texts and contexts that meet one or both of these criteria: Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*; Louis Lallemand's school of spirituality; Sacred Scripture; the *Imitatio Christi* (c. 1418–27) by Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471); the life of the Jesuit proto-missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552); accounts of the early seventeenth-century Jesuit missions to Japan that were popular reading at the time; and the *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) of the Jesuit José de Acosta (1539–1600). Though a fuller analysis of these texts will be employed, as needed, in each chapter, here they will be introduced and their role in the *Relations* specified as either shaping the authors' rhetoric of martyrdom or supporting it.

I shall begin my analysis in section two with the *Exercises*, which constituted for the Jesuit authors the *materia prima* and principal experience of God, through which they were introduced to an inner spiritual landscape where the free and total offering of oneself to Jesus Christ and his mission is presented as the principle and foundation of human life. We shall see how, in the *Exercises*, the authors were invited to embrace a disposition of availability to the will of God through a contemplative process of re-ordering any so-called 'disordered attachments' — to worldly honours, wealth, material objects or persons — so as to be wholly dedicated in mind, body and soul to a life of divinely instigated service. The manner and trajectory of their service was modelled for them in the *Exercises* on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who, presented as the Son of God, humbled himself by becoming a man, lived in poverty, and suffered various trials and a torturous death on a cross so as to save the world from sin. I shall then examine the authors' appropriation of these elements, focussing on their belief that, as followers of Christ, they must conjoin his mission with their own, making their evangelical efforts in *Nouvelle-France* a cosmic

battleground, where they were to suffer alongside God in their efforts to save Amerindian souls. Finally, we shall see how this same encounter with the *Exercices* throughout the authors' time in *Nouvelle-France* consciously brought new life to their religious conviction, and how this text was used to help buttress the faith of a notable Amerindian Christian who faced terrible persecution from their countrymen who rejected the Christian faith. As we shall see, offering oneself wholly to God, the process of reordering all of one's affections, conjoining oneself to the mission of Christ and embracing a life like his are the starting-point and wellspring of the rhetoric of martyrdom articulated in the *Relations*.

In the third section, I shall illustrate how the particular interpretation of the *Exercices* found in Louis Lallemand's school of spirituality influenced this important aspect of the authors' rhetoric. First, we shall see how Lallemand was a spiritual father to several of the authors of the *Relations*; how, in that role, he encouraged them to consider their interior appropriation of the *Exercices* and their relationship with God as the true landscape of life; and how labouring in *Nouvelle-France* was the best means of living out that life. I shall then identify five aspects of Lallemand's spirituality: (I) a second conversion; (II) a critique of action; (III) a guarding of the heart; (IV) the annihilation of self in the divine will of God; and (V) a life bound to the Cross of Christ. I shall illustrate how together these aspects contribute to the rhetorical articulation in the *Relations* of self-offering to God and the presentation of this particular Christian disposition as the balm that will heal the perceived plight of the Amerindian peoples. Finally, I shall show how this disposition was reinforced by Lallemand's proposition that any minister who wished to assist God effectively in saving souls must join himself to the Cross of Christ and share in the suffering of God's Son.

With the *Exercises* and the Louis Lallemant school established as the principal contexts from which the authors of the *Relations* developed their rhetoric of martyrdom, in section four I shall examine how Sacred Scripture was used to reinforce that rhetoric. Similarly, in section five, we shall see how the authors' deep affinity with the strong conviction in the *Imitatio Christi* that the Christian life is bound to Christ crucified entrenched all the more their association between suffering and holiness, and spurred them on amidst a growing threat to their lives in the mission. In section six, we shall see how the global epistolary exchange in the Jesuit order exposed the authors to accounts from the life of Francis Xavier and from the mission to Japan. These accounts, with their emphasis on availability, personal abnegation, courage amidst suffering and mystical encounters with the Cross of Christ, reinforced the authors' own belief in these aspects of the Christian life as they laboured in *Nouvelle-France*. Finally, in section six, we shall see how the observations of Acosta in his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias (Natural and Moral History)* informed the authors of the perceived spiritual plight of the Amerindian peoples. Acosta offered the missionaries hope of the Amerindians rising out of that serious predicament, and reiterated the authors' belief that Satan, the 'enemy of human nature', endlessly fought to prevent them from achieving their goals. I shall end with some conclusions that draw together these texts and contexts and form the religious worldview that lies at the foundation of the authors' rhetoric of martyrdom.

2. The Text of the *Relations*

Perhaps it is best to describe the *Relations* first simply as published letters, since the worldwide Jesuit epistolary tradition was their principal inspiration, set the parameters of much of their content, and outlined their basic literary form. Soon after the

founding of the order, Loyola sought to maintain the union of hearts and minds that he found to be an essential part of its early character, and decreed in his *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* that letter-writing among the various levels of superiors, and between fellow members, was the best means of achieving this.² Even while preparing this mandate, the founder had already begun a complex web of epistolary exchange that reached as far as his *confrère* Francis Xavier labouring in Asia, and to date some 7000 surviving letters have been identified that he sent to Jesuits, other ecclesiastics, lay collaborators and friends.³

Wanting letters such as these to be shared with people outside of the order, Loyola developed policies on their structure and content. For example, in his letter to the Jesuit Pierre Favre, dated 1542, he advises that anything written should always be of ‘the greatest service to the divine goodness’, the ‘greatest utility to our neighbour’, and the ‘greatest edification of your readers’.⁴ His instructions were later codified and enhanced in the *Formula scribendi* (1580), a document that for centuries shaped the structure of Jesuit letters.⁵ After these early days, Loyola’s desire to nurture a Jesuit tradition of correspondence amongst his dispersed members converged with the wider early modern interest in printed works and newly discovered lands, while at the same time feeding into the intellectual circle that came to be known as the ‘Republic of Letters’.⁶ This growing readership sought more details about the new people, cultures

² CSJ [673–5].

³ John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 9.

⁴ Ignatius Loyola, *Letters and Instructions*, trans. by Martin E. Palmer, *et al.* (St Louis, 2006), pp.90-3.

⁵ The *Formula scribendi* required Jesuit superiors to be aware of every facet of the communities under their care, and to include in their annual letters the number of Jesuits and their roles in the mission, new members who had joined the order and those who had died, news on the spiritual life of the community, and descriptions of its various works. They were asked to put particular emphasis on edifying news that would inspire the Christian faith of the reader. Cf. ‘Regulae, Ratio studiorum, Ordinationes, Instructiones, Industriae, Exercitia, Directorium’, in *Institutum Societatis Iesu*, 3 vols (Florence, 1893), pp. 41–46.

⁶ Cf. Mordechai Feingold (ed.), *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, MA; London, 2003); John Patrick Donnelly (ed.), *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540–1640* (Indianapolis and Cambridge, 2006); Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit*

and geography encountered by the missionaries and, in the centuries that followed, Jesuit authors responded by including in their letters details of the meteorological, botanical, zoological and anthropological particularities they encountered.⁷

Emerging from this tradition of the Jesuit order, each *Relation* from Canada maintained the format of a letter, written by the superior of the mission to his superior in France, and carefully described the spiritual movements and ministerial labours of the men in his care while providing detailed information on the Amerindian peoples they encountered and the natural world they inhabited. As their first and longest-running author, Le Jeune had a clear and permanent influence on the structure of the narratives. It was he who decided to order the information presented in each letter sequentially, stating that ‘In order to avoid all confusion, I shall follow the order of time’.⁸ He also decided that each letter should be divided into chapters, so that it might be easier to read.⁹ And he set the tone of the narrative, suggesting that, amidst all the possible facts that might be included, he had chosen those things that most moved his heart.¹⁰ Finally, in 1635, Le Jeune decided that the mission to the Hurons was of such importance that it merited its own special section in each *Relation*, written *in situ* by the local superior.

The process involved in writing each *Relation* is never described directly, but rather intimated at different points in the narrative by the author. First, it would seem that each letter was written over the course of the year amidst many other duties, and then finalized in haste. On one occasion Le Jeune indicates that he is writing a

Missions (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 193–215; Marc André Bernier *et al.* (eds.), *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas* (Toronto, 2014).

⁷ Ignatius Loyola, *Letters and Instructions*, ed. and trans. Martin E. Palmer, John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy (St Louis, 2006), pp. 472–74.

⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 6.

⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 3.

¹⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 322–24.

particular section of his letter while in the ‘midst of a forest’.¹¹ He claims his 1636 *Relation* was written ‘now in one place, now in another; sometimes upon the water, sometimes upon the land’.¹² And indicates that, at least on one occasion, he continued to add the latest details for the reader right up to the moment that the letter had to be placed on the ship destined for France.¹³ Considering that over the years that followed, the mission to *Nouvelle-France* increased in complexity, it is reasonable to conclude that subsequent authors faced similar circumstances. Second, while preparing his annual letters, the superior would write to each mission area within the colony asking the brethren to send him details of their life, work and insights, which he would then weave together into a coherent narrative.¹⁴ Third, the authors often referred back to information from previous *Relations*, using that data either to contextualize or to strengthen their conclusions on any given point.¹⁵ The *Relations* were then dispatched on ships that left for France. Edited by the superior in Paris, they were sent to the house of the royal printer, Sébastien Cramoisy, to be printed and bound for distribution.¹⁶

The number of small errors in fonts and pagination and the occasional misplacing of words found in these annual publications suggest that they were produced in haste, while the number of reprints every year suggest that they were in

¹¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 68.

¹² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 272.

¹³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 209.

¹⁴ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 92–93; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle France* (1637), p. 279; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 49–50; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 170.

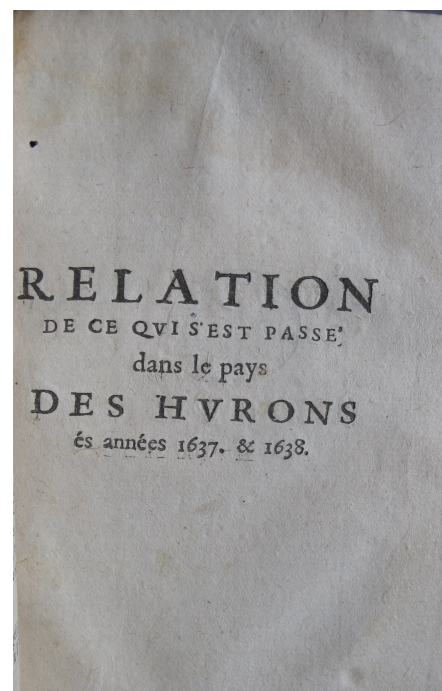
¹⁵ Eg. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 47–48; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), 190–91; Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 108, 111–12.

¹⁶ For all but the 1637 *Relation*, printed by Jean Le Boulenger in Rouen, Sébastien Cramoisy had an exclusive contract with the Jesuits of France for their publication. A principal publisher in the kingdom, a business associate of Cardinal Richelieu, and an official printer in ordinary to the king, Cramoisy was a leading publisher of schoolbooks and devotional literature produced during the Counter-Reformation. His status as a leading printer in the city of Paris no doubt added prestige to the *Relations*, and his interest in publishing devotional works arguably places the *Relations* within that same genre. See: Jane McLeod, *Licensing Loyalty: Printers, Patrons, and the State in Early Modern France* (Pennsylvania, 2011), p. 17; Henri-Jean Martin, ‘Un Grand éditeur parisien au XVIIe siècle: Sébastien Cramoisy’, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 1957, 179–88; Henri-Jean Martin’s *Le livre français sous l’ancien régime* (Paris: 1987), pp. 55–67.

high demand.¹⁷ Aware that a ship from *Nouvelle-France* had docked in the harbour, the readership was probably anxious to receive the latest news. Each *Relation* was published as an octavo and bound in leather. Its frontispiece always indicated the title, year of publication and signatory author as well as the addressee, and was adorned with a print of a mother *cigognes* (stork) feeding her young with her own flesh.



(Figure 1)



(Figure 2)

The title pages of: (1) Paul Le Juene, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France en l'année 1638* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1638) and (2) François-Joseph Le Mercier, the *Relation de ce qui c'est passé dans le pays des Hurons es années 1637 & 1638* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1638). Courtesy of the Codrington Library, All Souls College, Oxford.

Cramoisy seems to have printed each *Relation* more than once, but never indicated when they were second or third editions. Nevertheless, there are notable differences between them; for example, mistakes from previous printings are sometimes corrected; one might have nicer stock than another, or more blank pages at its beginning and end. These should therefore be considered edited reprints and not

¹⁷ McCoy, *Jesuit Relations of Canada, 1632–1673*, pp. vii–ix.

revised editions. On a few occasions the authors themselves commented on the obvious haste in producing each *Relation* and the resultant errors. In one instance, Le Jeune appears to be commenting on the number of type-setting errors in the printed copies that he had received, writing that ‘I shall have this consolation this year, that, in saying little, few faults will slip under the roller of the press’.¹⁸ In another, he corrects an error in the text himself. In the 1637 *Relation*, the printed text stated that to drive out a demon from an Amerindian, Le Jeune would hold his ‘*espée*’ (sword) over him.¹⁹ The following year, however, he corrects this, assuring the readers that he had intended to hold an ‘*exorcisme*’ (exorcism) over the man in question and not a ‘sword’.²⁰

This study has uncovered no lists of sales in the remaining records of either the Cramoisy family or the Jesuit order to illustrate the size or identity of the *Relations*’ readership. Nevertheless, a careful study of the narratives confirms that the *Relations* were, as the historian Philip Boucher suggests, largely read by an ‘upper-class audience in the zealous grip of the Catholic revival’, as well as various religious in France.²¹ In their pages there are direct addresses to Louis XIII, King of France, and excerpts from letters of support from his wife, Queen Anne of Austria (1601–1666).²² The brother of the king, Gaston I, duc d’Anguien (1608–1660), is thanked for his kind letter of support.²³ Cardinal Richelieu is cited as the mission’s chief supporter,²⁴ while in the same edition high-ranking French aristocrats such as Nicholas-Joachim Rouault de Gamache (1609–1639) and Richelieu’s niece Marie

¹⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 77.

¹⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 142.

²⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), pp. 78–79.

²¹ Boucher, *Les Nouvelles Frances*, p. 28.

²² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 7; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 7; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 16–7.

²³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 9–17.

²⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 2, 339.

Madeleine de Vignerot, duchesse d'Aiguillon (1604–1675), are acknowledged for their promised financial support.

In his 1635 *Relation*, Le Jeune dedicates an entire chapter to explaining to his readership how it would be 'a benefit to both old and new France' to send colonists.²⁵ The following year, he presents a reply to ten direct questions posed to him by readers regarding the suitability of *Nouvelle-France* for French immigration. Among these the readers asks whether the colony's fortifications are secure and safe from Spanish invasion and whether enough land is ploughed to support a larger population. They inquire as to the quality of the soil and wonder what sorts of fruits and vegetables are grown. They ask about the kinds of animals available for hunting, and wonder what things can be taken from *Nouvelle-France* for sale in Europe.²⁶ All these questions suggest that women and men of some means were not only reading the *Relations*, but also relying on them when considering whether they should settle in the New World.

In that *Relation* of 1636, Le Jeune quotes from letters sent by various nuns who have read earlier texts and were moved to write to him personally. In one instance a sister wrote that 'You must know that New France is beginning to enter the minds of a great many people', while others zealously volunteered to come and labour alongside the Jesuits.²⁷ In 1637, Le Jeune informs the readership that the Carmelite nuns of Aix, with the support of the city's mayor, have established a permanent chapel of perpetual prayer for the missions to *Nouvelle-France*.²⁸ That same year, he thanks the Sisters of Montmartre, the Nuns of Ave Maria, and the Daughters of Sainte-Marie in Paris for their ongoing prayers.²⁹ Le Mercier, in his 1637 *Relation* from the Hurons, relates his confidence in the 'thousands and thousands of persons in

²⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 51–59.

²⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 150–83.

²⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 20–24. Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 207.

²⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 10–11.

²⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 12.

France' who are not only aware of the missionaries' labours, but also praying to God for their success.³⁰

Finally, there are several occasions when the authors reach out through their writing to fellow Jesuits in France who were reading about their heroic exploits. The most poignant example of this comes from Brébeuf who, in 1636, addressed his brothers in Europe directly, outlining what kind of Jesuit is required to work among the Hurons. In a long chapter entitled 'Important Advice for Those Whom It Shall Please God to Call to New France', the veteran missionary reminds his readers that it is only love for God and the Amerindian peoples that can sustain anyone in this mission field.³¹ He warns that the Amerindians will not be impressed by their extraordinary competence in philosophy or theology, but rather by their skill with a paddle, their constancy on long voyages, their love of long periods of silence, and their generosity.³² He also warns them to seek neither the comforts that they might have in France nor any form of solemnity, ritual, or privilege that might until that point have sustained them in the ecclesiastical life.³³ And he cautions that the Amerindians are a 'brutal and sensuous people', prone to many vices, so that anyone of delicate sensibilities might find their vow of chastity challenged.³⁴ Though the harshness of these warnings may seem uninviting, nonetheless, as we shall see throughout this study, they were likely to add to the appeal for at least part of the Jesuit readership, and thus constitute an invitation to join the authors and their companions in suffering with Christ at the service of the Amerindian peoples.

3. The *Spiritual Exercises* in the *Relations*

³⁰ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 256; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 57.

³¹ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 58–60.

³² Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 62–66.

³³ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 71–76.

³⁴ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 76.

This appeal was no doubt enkindled in the religious imaginations of these Jesuit by their prayerful encounter with the *Exercises*; composed by Loyola over many years, beginning in 1522 when, as a young layman, he spent some months in prayer in a cave just outside the city of Manresa in Spain. They were officially published only in 1548 after he had presented them, as founder and first General of the Jesuit order, for the approval of Pope Paul III in Rome.³⁵ John O'Malley asserts that the *Exercises*

Encapsulated the essence of Ignatius' own spiritual turnaround, and presented them in a form meant to guide others to analogous changes of vision and motivation. Ignatius used the *Exercises* as the primary means of motivating his first disciples, and prescribed it as an experience for all who later entered the Society [...] The *Exercises* remained the document that told Jesuits, on the most profound level, what they were and what they were supposed to be.³⁶

As Loyola outlined in his *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, the authors of the *Relations*, like all Jesuits, had two experiences of the full *Exercises*, once during their first year as novices, and then again in their *Tertianship* or 'Third Year' of preparation before they pronounced their final vows.³⁷

³⁵ William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis, 1972), p. 8; Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, trans. by William J. Young (St Louis, 1972), pp. 112–13.

³⁶ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 4.

³⁷ *CSJ* [16, 65, 71, 73, 98, 119, 278, and 514]. Each of the authors of the *Relations* studied here is listed as having fulfilled his novitiate training, which necessarily included praying the full thirty-day *Exercises*; most are listed as having completed Tertianship, for which the same requirement applies. Where there is no record of Tertianship, the documents are most likely no longer available. Paul Le Jeune: novitiate in Paris (1613) and Tertianship at Rouen (1628) under the direction of Louis Lallemand; Jean de Brébeuf: novitiate in Rouen (1617) and Tertianship in Eu (1630); Isaac Jogues: novitiate in Rouen under the direction of Louis Lallemand (1624–25), but no record of his Tertianship; François Joseph Le Mercier: novitiate in Paris (1622) and Tertianship in Clermont (between 1633 and 1635); Barthélemy Vimont: novitiate in Rouen (1614) and Tertianship in Eu (between 1628 and 1629); Jérôme Lalemant: novitiate in Paris (1610–11) and Tertianship in Rouen (sometime between 1626 and 1627); Paul Ragueneau: novitiate in Paris (1626–27), but no record of Tertianship. A record of the formation of each man is found in *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1 (Toronto and Quebec City, 1966).

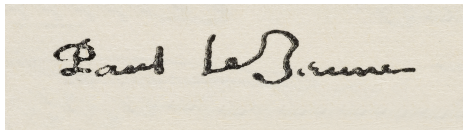


Figure 1: Paul Le Jeune, sj

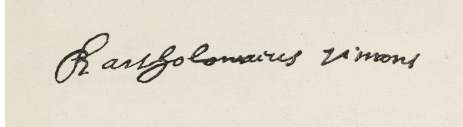


Figure 3: Barthélemy Vimont, sj

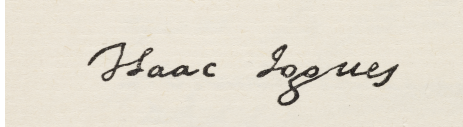


Figure 5: Isaac Jogues, sj

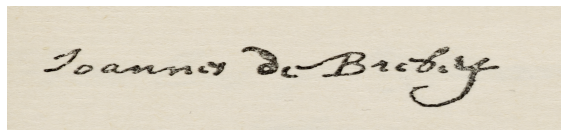


Figure 2: Jean de Brébeuf, sj



Figure 4: Françoise Le Mercier, sj

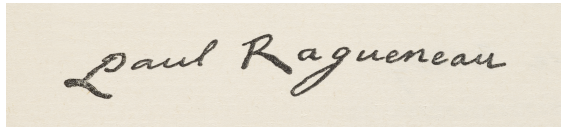


Figure 6: Paul Ragueneau, sj

The signatures of Paul Le Jeune (1591–1664), Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649), Barthélemy Vimont (1594–1667), Françoise-Joseph Le Mercier (1604–90), Isaac Jogues (1607–46), and Paul Ragueneau (1608–1680), taken from their corresponding letters of consent upon pronouncing their final vows in the Society of Jesus. With no remaining copies of the original handwritten *Relations*, here we have examples of the authors' penmanship. Courtesy of the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome.

In addition, every year of their lives in the order, they prayed an eight-day abridged version of the *Exercises* to continue their spiritual development. These are important facts to keep in mind, since the authors' religious worldview was influenced by the *Exercises* not only at the outset of their Jesuit life, but again just before they were sent to *Nouvelle-France*, and then again revisited *sur place* as they wrote their *Relations*.³⁸ The influence of the *Exercises* on the authors was ultimately a deeply personal one, making any attempt to uncover its full effects impossible. And yet, as the principal foundation of their religious worldview, it can by no means be ignored. Throughout this thesis, I shall illustrate how the authors' experience of the *Exercises*, as a primary text and as an overarching context, formed their religious landscape and shaped their articulation of the mission in *Nouvelle-France*.

It is perhaps best to situate the genesis of the *Exercises* geographically on the fields of Pamplona. It was there, in 1521, which Loyola, as a young knight at the

³⁸ In his 1640 *Relation*, Jérôme Lalemant indicates that a principal reason for building a Jesuit residence at the centre of the Huron Nation was so that the missionaries could have a stable place where they could pray the *Exercises* and meditate in solitude. See: Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), p. 46.

service of the duke of Navarre, chose to remain at the defence of a citadel despite the perceived futility of doing so and fell to the ground after his right leg was shattered by a shell from the opposing artillery. He had hitherto been given to ‘worldly vanities’ and a ‘vain and overpowering desire to gain renown’, but his ideas of chivalry and courtly love, the attainment of honours and wealth, and of victory on the battlefield and in the bedroom now lay defeated.³⁹ Humbled by a sense of his own mortality, his French captors returned him to his family castle. Although he faced a prognosis of death, he survived and, during his months of convalescence, according to his autobiography, he was given two books to read. The first was the *Vita Christi* by the Carthusian monk Ludolph of Saxony (1295–1378), which blended Sacred Scripture and medieval Christian mythology to encourage the reader to meditate on moments in the life of Jesus Christ. The second, a medieval best seller, was *The Golden Legend*, attributed to the Dominican Archbishop of Genoa Jacobo de Voragine (1230–1299), a work that floridly chronicles the lives of the saints.⁴⁰ With these texts in hand, Loyola is said to have ceased to find any sense of inner fulfilment in his past desires for worldly success, and instead became energized by dreams of imitating the lives of the saints. He determined to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and then to live a life of austerity.⁴¹ On his way, Loyola states, he stopped in the town of Manresa, where he remained for several months, volunteering at a local hospice, praying, fasting, reading, engaging in spiritual conversations and writing down his experiences.⁴² With only a Spanish copy of the *Imitatio Christi* for reading, the pilgrim began an intense

³⁹ Ignatius Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius Loyola*, trans. Joseph Tylenda (Delaware, 1984), p. 7.

⁴⁰ See: Charles Abbot Conway, *The 'Vita Christi' of Ludolph of Saxony and late Medieval Devotion Centred on the Incarnation: A Descriptive Analysis* (Salzburg, 1976), introduction; Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Re-Examination of its Paradoxical History* (Wisconsin, 1985), pp. 197–213; Jacques Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and the Golden Legend*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (New Jersey, 2014).

⁴¹ *Autobiography*, p. 14.

⁴² *Autobiography*, pp. 28–44.

period of prayerful introspection. In this state, he examined his sins and the movements of his desires and his inclinations; later he suggested that, through these experiences, ‘God had dealt with him [...] as a schoolteacher with a child whilst instructing him’.⁴³

Although he continued to develop and refine the text until its publication in 1548, it was in Manresa that the *Exercises* took its basic form. Not *per se* a piece of devotional literature or a theological work, it constitutes a practical manual, systematically organized with meditations, contemplations and prayers, meant to help one come to an unbiased decision as to the will of God in one’s life — a process developed from Loyola’s own experiences in prayer. He suggests in the text that the ultimate goal of the *Exercises* is the ‘the conquest of self, and the regulation of one’s life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of an inordinate attachment’.⁴⁴ Each individual exercise is therefore meant for the ‘preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of one’s life, seeking the soul’s salvation’.⁴⁵ Intended to be an experience of approximately thirty days, Loyola divided the *Exercises* into four ‘Weeks’.⁴⁶ At the beginning of the text, he placed an almost philosophical statement, describing what he considered to be the end of every person, entitled the ‘Principle and Foundation’. In this brief statement, he suggests that every person was created to ‘praise, reverence, and serve God’, and for nothing else, concluding that all other things in the world (i.e. material objects, power, etc.) are to be treated only as a means to that end, and never as ends in themselves.⁴⁷

⁴³ Autobiography, p. 36.

⁴⁴ *SE* [21].

⁴⁵ *SE* [1].

⁴⁶ Note: these weeks do not necessarily have to correspond to four sets of seven days, but are stages of the experience, through which each person passes according to the time they require.

⁴⁷ *SE* [23].

In the First Week, Loyola draws individuals into five different meditations that focus on the ugliness of sin, the fires of hell and the dangers of disordered passions, so that they may recognize how these realities stand in the way of the true human disposition, a life devoted to the service of God.⁴⁸ At the climax of this experience, exercitants are told to imagine themselves standing before Christ crucified and to ask ‘what have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ?’. Furthermore, they are to ponder on what being with Jesus Christ in this way presents to the mind’s eye.⁴⁹

The Second Week begins with what has been called the ‘Triple Colloquy’, in which exercitants are asked to imagine the Holy Trinity looking down at the earth, filled with women and men caught up in ignorance and sin, and responding by saying ‘let us work the redemption of the whole human race’, and thus ‘work the most holy Incarnation’ of Jesus Christ.⁵⁰ A parable-like meditation follows on the value of honouring a truly noble earthly king; it asks how much more we ought to honour Christ, the heavenly King, who came to redeem the world. This is followed by a series of contemplations with Sacred Scripture that invite each person to enter, through the use of the imagination, into the birth and ministerial life of Christ. In a further meditation, the ‘Meditation on the Two Standards’, exercitants are asked to choose between Christ, presented as the ultimate king to be followed in love, and Satan, ‘the enemy of human nature’, who reigns over all that is evil in this world.⁵¹ Another meditation, the ‘Three Kinds of Men’, presents three stages in the human struggle to be rid of material or emotional ‘attachments’: those who wish to free themselves, but die before this is possible; those who attempt to do so while still

⁴⁸ *SE* [24–54].

⁴⁹ *SE* [53].

⁵⁰ *SE* [102–9].

⁵¹ *SE* [136–47].

holding on to what they already have; and those who do so, seeking only to ‘will and not will as God our Lord inspires them, and as seems better for the praise and service of the Divine Majesty’.⁵² Loyola also presents ‘Three Kinds of Humility’, in the greatest of which a person is disposed ‘to imitate and be in reality more like our Lord’, choosing poverty, insults and being accounted a ‘fool for Christ’.⁵³ With these different meditations in mind, exercitants are asked to ‘Make a Choice of a Way of Life’ that they feel corresponds to the will of God, and offer it up to the divine will in prayer.⁵⁴

The Third and Fourth Weeks are then designed to provide a prayerful context to confirm the choice of life just made. In the Third Week, Loyola invites exercitants to meditate on the betrayal, trial, scourging and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, asking them to consider ‘that Christ does all of this for my sins’, and then to ask ‘what I ought to do and suffer with him’. In the Fourth Week, a meditation on the resurrection of Christ is presented; and in the ‘Meditation on Divine Love’, exercitants are asked to remember all of the spiritual insights that came into their minds throughout the *Exercises*, to remember their decision on a particular way of life and to bring it to a reflection on divine love. This love is ‘one that manifests itself in deeds’ and also in ‘a mutual sharing of goods’, suggesting that to be like God is to live a life of love, offering ‘all I possess and myself with it’.⁵⁵ This mediation ends with a prayer entitled the *Suscipe* (or ‘Receive’), in which exercitants offer their ‘liberty’, ‘understanding’ and ‘will’, and all that they possess to God, asking only to receive his divine love and grace.⁵⁶

⁵² *SE* [153–5].

⁵³ *SE* [165–7].

⁵⁴ *SE* [169–188].

⁵⁵ *SE* [234].

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Throughout the *Relations* examined in this study, the *Exercises* are mentioned directly on only a few occasions. In these cases, however, their value for the missionaries is made abundantly clear. For example, in 1636 Brébeuf mentions that all the Jesuits working among the Hurons had gathered together for the ‘Spiritual Exercises’, their annual retreat, ‘as is the custom of our Society’.⁵⁷ He suggests that the importance of labouring among the Amerindians and the nature of their labours meant that the missionaries had ‘more need of these exercises’, as their efforts required a deeper ‘union with God’. He briefly reflects on this ‘union’, writing that ‘those who come should bring a good reserve fund of virtue if they wish here to gather the fruits thereof’.⁵⁸ Brébeuf thus draws for the reader of the *Relation* a parallel between the Jesuits’ experience at prayer in the *Exercises* and their work among the Amerindian peoples, concluding that the union with God that is deepened while praying with the *Exercises* on retreat is central to their evangelical success in *Nouvelle-France*. This brief passage reveals that the author understood their ministry to be an extension of their experience of God in the *Exercises*, and their own spiritual state *vis-à-vis* their divine Creator to be an essential aspect of their success. Here we see the proverbial bridge, present throughout the narratives, that brings together the landscapes of the *Exercises* and those of *Nouvelle-France*, where the religious worldview of the authors and their experiences in the missions are synchronized.

This same synchronization is present in the 1640 *Relation* of Jérôme Lalemant, referring not to a Jesuit’s retreat but to the first Amerindian Christian to pray the *Exercises* in the Americas, Joseph Chihouatenhoua (d. 1640). Described by Lalemant as the ‘pearl of our Christians’, Joseph was held up by all the authors as the

⁵⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 36.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

model result of the Jesuits' evangelical labours.⁵⁹ The author describes in the narrative the feeling among many of the missionaries that the vivacity of faith in this new Christian and his own desire to evangelize meant that he would face great adversity. For this reason, they judged it necessary to inform him with some more particular instruction, so as to strengthen his courage, as the one who would serve as example for all the others.⁶⁰ The nature of this instruction was to lead Joseph in an eight-day experience of prayer with the *Exercises*,⁶¹ suggesting that, for the Jesuits, they were the context from which one grows in union with God and, through that union, is better prepared for the struggle of living out the Christian life.

Jérôme Lalemant proceeds to describe different insights that came to Joseph while at prayer. 'The Christian' is said to have understood that this time at prayer is of such importance that he said 'I must then attend to it more mightily than ever I have undertaken any business in the world'.⁶² He is described as having understood the great desire articulated in the *Exercises* for each person to discover the will of God for him or her, and to live it out in life, saying 'Alas my God, I am nothing [...] I come to hear you; speak then in the depth of my heart, and tell me, "Do that", and I will do it, my God, though I should die for it'.⁶³ He is then reported to have asked the Virgin Mary to help him in his desire, saying 'Have pity on me, I have come here to know the will of God [...] but I have no intelligence'. During these days of prayer with the *Exercises*, he is also said to have proclaimed that 'I no longer fear death', and to have 'frequently offered his blood and his life for the conversion of his fellow countrymen'.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), p. 128.

⁶⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), p. 46.

⁶¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), p. 46.

⁶² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), p. 48.

⁶³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), p. 49.

⁶⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639-1640), pp. 53–54.

In the 1648 *Relation* of Ragueneau, this same connection is made when the author draws a parallel between the fact that Brébeuf had only just completed his annual retreat and his capture and killing by the Iroquois:

But, no doubt, the providence of God had led him to this death in a special way; for it was only two days since he had made a general confession, and had completed, in this house of Sainte-Marie, the Spiritual Exercises of the Society in a retreat of eight days, which he had taken expressly for dealing with God alone, and for disposing himself for the passage to Eternity. It was there that he became more than ever inflamed with the desire to shed his blood and his life for the salvation of souls.⁶⁵

Aware that war surrounded him on all sides, Brébeuf was willing to return to the mission field and, to prepare himself for the dangers that he faced, he prayed with the *Exercises*. It was the veteran missionary's way of 'dealing with', or being present to, God, his passage into a conversation with his Lord, in preparation for death. More importantly, however, this same passage reveals a fundamental aspect of our study: that in praying to God through the *Exercises*, Brébeuf is said to have been 'more than ever inflamed with the desire to lavish his blood and his life for the salvation of souls'. In this brief but powerfully expressive statement, we see that the missionary directly related his desire to offer himself to God, even unto death, and his belief in the divine fruits of that offering, namely the 'salvation of souls', to his experience of prayer with the *Exercises*.

Within the *Relations* we shall uncover a religious worldview shaped by a particular trajectory that draws on the authors' on-going encounters with the *Exercises*. As we shall see, they clearly present their relationship with God as both the principle and foundation of their lives, and the ultimate divine source of their identities. Every missionary is thought to be fulfilling his divinely instituted purpose only when his life centres on the praise and reverence of the Creator. The authors identify this praise and reverence of God in a life that is prepared to discern, and then

⁶⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648-1649), pp. 13-14.

readily follow, what is decided to be the divine will. Recognizing through their experience of the *Exercises* that sin comes from ‘disordered attachments’, and that one must choose between the two standards of Christ and the ‘enemy of human nature’, we shall see that they believe ‘detachment’ from sensual desires and personal gain as the means of attaching themselves all the more to God and to his desires for them. The Jesuits are presented as seeking to achieve this disposition through penance, mortifications and self-sacrifice, which are exemplified in the suffering of Jesus Christ on his Cross. The journey towards a union with God, particularly through Christ, is presented as one of emulation, so that out of love for God one is disposed to follow his will lovingly, as Christ did and, in doing so, gladly take on the calumny, scorn and suffering described in the ‘Three Kinds of Humility’. As we shall see, it is suggested throughout the *Relations* that when the missionaries suffer amidst their labours, they are suffering with Christ, as participants in his divine mission to bring about the eternal salvation of the Amerindian peoples. This suffering is thus presented as a gift, natural to the Christian vocation, and understood, in fact, to have always been an aspect of the Christian life.

4. Louis Lallemand and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom

As a young man, Louis Lallemand obtained an insight while at prayer that remained throughout his life at the foundation of his religious experience. No matter what he was doing, where he was going or whom he was with, he understood that ‘I must always remain within myself [...] I must never altogether go abroad’.⁶⁶ It was as if his

⁶⁶ *SD*, p. 1. It is important to note that the *Spiritual Doctrine* poses a historiographical problem, since it was not in fact written by Lallemand: it was composed in 1694, fifty-nine years after his death, by the French Jesuit Pierre Champion (1632–1701). Champion had never met Lallemand, but was a student of another Jesuit, Jean Rigoleuc (1596–1658), who had made his Tertianship under Lallemand’s direction, and soon after became one of his greatest disciples. Thus the *Spiritual Doctrine* is a compilation of the detailed notes taken by Rigoleuc during his Tertianship, which were passed on to Champion, who organized them into a single work. What in the text is purely Lallemand, and what in its pages reflects the additional influence of Rigoleuc or Champion, is ultimately unclear. However, both Bremond and Guibert concluded that the admiration of his followers left Lallemand’s particular doctrine intact. Cf.

primary ‘world’ of meaning and experience lay within his mind and soul, and the world — that which lay outside him — was ‘abroad’, beyond and secondary. His first biographer, Pierre Champion, even went so far as to write that ‘His whole life was supernatural’.⁶⁷

Despite the seemingly monastic tone of his spirituality, after having attended the Jesuit College at Bourges, Lallemand entered the Jesuit order in Nancy, France, in 1605 and enthusiastically took on an active apostolic life, eventually working in its colleges as a professor of philosophy, then of mathematics and finally of scholastic theology.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it was his interior life with God and that of his *confrères* that most interested him. To that end, his superiors placed him at different times into the positions of novice master, superior of young Jesuits in training and director of the Tertianship, where he accompanied seasoned men in their preparation for final vows.⁶⁹ It was in these later years of spiritual direction that Lallemand was master of novices to Jogues and Daniel, served as Brébeuf’s spiritual director and later as his professor of rhetoric, worked alongside Garnier in the classroom, and was the master of the Tertianship for both Brébeuf and Le Jeune.⁷⁰

It is likely that, in these various capacities and circumstances, Lallemand presented to the future missionaries of *Nouvelle-France* his interpretation of the *Exercices*. He proposed to those under his tutelage that the ministerial effectiveness of every Jesuit lies principally in the state of his inner life, how ‘he walks in the ways of that holiness that is peculiar to our Company’, thereby striving to know the

Histoire Littéraire, II, 450; Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 354. For an example of how his degree of separation from Lallemand may have effected Champion’s work see: G. Bottereau, ‘Pessimisme et optimisme de Louis Lallemand S.J.’, *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 53.105 (1984).

⁶⁷ *SD*, p. 24.

⁶⁸ *SD*, pp. 2–3.

⁶⁹ Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 353.

⁷⁰ François Roustang, *An Autobiography of Martyrdom*, trans. M. Renelle (London, 1964), p. 25.

‘dispositions’ of his soul so as to ‘fulfil the designs of God’.⁷¹ The spiritual landscape of the soul, shaped by one’s encounter with God in the *Exercises*, was for Lallemand the place never to be ‘completely left’. It was the true space of ultimate meaning and ultimate priority where, as free as possible from inordinate attachments, every Jesuit can be in his heart at union with Jesus Christ, freely and lovingly living out the divine will. What Henri Bremond (1835–1933) refers to as the ‘school of Louis Lallemand’ was the result of the spiritual father’s efforts to reach this end. According to several historians of Catholic spirituality, this school can be divided into four major themes, or spiritual dispositions: a ‘second conversion’, the ‘critique of action’, the ‘guard of the heart’ and the ‘guidance of the Holy Spirit’.⁷² According to Lallemand, these extrapolated interpretations of the *Exercises*, which include a strong emphasis on self-abnegation and the conjoining of every person to the Cross of Christ, culminated in his conclusion that the best means for any Jesuit to achieve union with Jesus Christ was ‘to be sent out on some foreign mission, and especially to Canada’. This was because he viewed Canada as being ‘more fruitful in labours and crosses’, and saw it as ‘offering a less brilliant career’, thereby contributing ‘more to the sanctification of the missionaries’.⁷³ Moreover, since his own poor health dissuaded superiors from permitting him to go, he is said to have all the more ‘exerted himself to procure fervent labourers for that mission’.⁷⁴ As we shall see in later chapters, Lallemand’s personal belief that *Nouvelle-France* was the best place to live out a life with Christ honed the religious worldview of the authors of the *Relations*. It set them on a particular trajectory, through the *Exercises*, into a ‘New World’ always seen, as it

⁷¹ *SD*, p. 77.

⁷² *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 453–86, George Bottereau, ‘Louis Lallemand’, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 12 vols (Paris, 1976.), IX, 130–31; Bottereau, *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 45.90 (1976), 291–305; 53.105 (1984), 351–6; and 55.109 (1986), 155–9; Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 355.

⁷³ *SD*, pp. 7–8.

⁷⁴ *SD*, p. 8.

were, from within the realm of their souls, an interior place that they were trained never to leave, no matter where they were sent.

Thus the steps that each of the authors then took as they travelled from port, to ship, to sea and into *Nouvelle-France*, were not simply part of a physical journey into a new and distant land, nor simply a new evangelical mission, or a necessary ecclesiastical complement to France's growing colonial ambitions, but steps into a new interior space of their souls' journey with God. This aspect of the authors' religious worldview in the *Relations* could have come either from the direct influence of Lallemand or from the religious *milieu* of his teachings, so admired among them, and reflects his proposal that every Jesuit is invited, at the end of his training, to undergo a 'second conversion'.⁷⁵

Lallemand proposes that in the lives of most saints there are two conversions: the first when they choose to give themselves up to the service of God, and the second when they decide to devote themselves entirely to their soul's perfection. The movement from the first to the second was thought by Lallemand to occur during a Jesuit's Tertianship. Thus, according to Brémond, Lallemand had in mind two types of Jesuits, those who remained, after this experience, the 'non-converted' and those few who were the 'interiors', the 'perfects', the 'contemplatives' who, at the end of their Tertianship, moved to a new level of spiritual interiority.⁷⁶ The former had made a commitment to a life of serving God in the order, lived its rules and obligations outwardly, and may even have been completely committed to the labours assigned to them; in the end, however, according to Lallemand, they did not seek a deep, life-giving interiority. The latter sought 'perfection' through a commitment to

⁷⁵ Brémond's study of Lallemand concludes that though the *Spiritual Doctrine* has aspects applicable to all Jesuits, as well as to devout religious, seculars and laity, when attempting to grasp the context in which his doctrine is specifically valuable, one must appreciate that it is best understood as directed towards mature Jesuits preparing to take their final vows. Cf. *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 453.

⁷⁶ *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 455.

God in the order, and chose to embark on a profound inner journey of self-abnegation and contemplative union with their Creator.

As Bremond suggests, Lallemand believed that the ‘second conversion’ was where one was to ‘take a new path’ and to enter a ‘certain order’ different from the common order: in a word, ‘to cross the border of the mystical world’.⁷⁷ The spiritual father suggests to those under his direction that they are to:

Resolve generously to renounce all designs of our own devising, all human views, all desires and hopes of things that might gratify self-love; and, in short, everything that might hinder us in promoting the glory of God [...] in the words of Scripture [...] ‘seeking God with all our heart’.⁷⁸

This ‘conversion’, therefore, involves an effort towards ‘placing one’s union with God at the centre of their motivation in life’, ‘seeking divine wisdom rather than human wisdom’, and realizing that no matter how foolish God’s desires may seem to the rest of the world, ‘the more love we have for humiliation and the Cross, the wiser we are’.⁷⁹ Of those who had not made this plunge, the so-called ‘unconverted’, Lallemand acknowledges that as preachers they might gain many followers, or as missionaries be sensationally successful or, again, as confessors tend to long lines of eager penitents; and yet, he asks, ‘Are they united to God by prayer? Are they perfectly detached from themselves? Do they act only from divine motives?’⁸⁰ The ‘second conversion’ was a movement towards an inner life with God through the Jesuit’s deeper appropriation of the *Exercises*. This was a life renouncing all forms of ‘self-love’, in which the inner battle of every man to be at the total disposal of God’s will, to follow lovingly the folly of the Cross of Christ, was given the central place,

⁷⁷ The original text reads: ‘*Franchir le pas, c’est prendre un chemin nouveau; c’est pénétrer dans un “certain ordre” différent de l’ordre commun que l’on n’avait pas encore quitté; c’est, en un mot, passer la frontière du monde mystique*’ *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 461.

⁷⁸ *SD*, p. 29.

⁷⁹ *SD*, p. 132.

⁸⁰ *SD*, p. 195.

and from this place spilled out into his ministry in the world the graces that are given by union with God.

As we shall see in this study, there is a parallel between the step of Lallemand's 'second conversion' into this mystical world and the authors' journey into *Nouvelle-France*, described as a 'Land of the Cross', an 'Empire of Satan' and as a place where the Amerindians are seen to be in a cosmic struggle to embrace their divinely given human identities. The authors see their mission through the lens of their experience of the *Exercises*, their inner experience of God in prayer; for they share the belief that Lallemand presented to them, that what is most true about the world is actually revealed to them in the landscape of their souls.

To live continuously in a contemplative state is by no means easy, and is identified by Lallemand as a great challenge in light of the constant availability each Jesuit must maintain to the requirements of his mission. For this reason, he must always, as Bremond puts it, make a constant 'critique of action'. Indeed the model presented for this difficult task is no less than God himself. Lallemand suggests that, just as the triune God is always perfectly attuned to the inner workings and operations of each of his three persons, at the same time he is able to govern all of creation, the one never diminishing the perfect execution of the other. In a sense, according to Lallemand, 'He [God] acts externally, as though he were not acting at all', but rather as an extension of his inner life.⁸¹ Similarly, and to the best of one's own ability, he proposes that all Jesuits

Ought to have within ourselves and for ourselves a most perfect life by a constant application of our understanding and will to God. Then we shall be able to go out of ourselves for the service of our neighbour without prejudice to our interior life, not giving ourselves up wholly to others, nor applying

⁸¹ *SD*, p. 182.

ourselves to exterior occupations, except by way of diversion, so to say; and thus our principal business will ever be the interior life.⁸²

Here he emphasizes that, as we have seen in the *Exercises*, the Jesuit is invited freely to embrace the will of God in his life and then to live out that will in the service of others. This is, for him, principally an interior striving, which will then manifest itself in external works. Lallemand argues that the Jesuits' 'first care' and 'chief study' must be their own perfection, and only then 'the service of our neighbour'.⁸³ And he even goes as far as to say that 'Whoever acts otherwise [...] though he wears the habit of the Society [Jesuits], he possesses none of its spirit'.⁸⁴ Striving for personal perfection through a deeper union between the soul and God is thus paramount, since God, as the proverbial 'first cause', is the only real source of all that is good and true.

To this end, and echoing the 'Principle and Foundation' of the *Exercises* described earlier, the contemplative and ministerial life of a Jesuit is said to involve the 'renunciation' of 'all friendships, all studies, all pursuits, which neither assist us on our own way to God, nor enable us to lead our neighbour to him'.⁸⁵ Lallemand asserts that Jesuits are always to give priority to the 'contemplation' of God over the action of ministry'.⁸⁶ Not having this focus actually decreases the effectiveness of their labours, since a 'man of prayer' is said to achieve much more in one year 'than another will do in his whole life'.⁸⁷

Instead, as Bremond points out, Lallemand suggests two methods, or *foci*, in the prayerful contemplations of a Jesuit which bring about an apostolic life rooted in contemplation: first, that it be done in a way that gives better direction to the will; and second, that it produce inner movements of the heart that can then extend outwards

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *SD*, p. 55.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *SD*, p. 55.

⁸⁶ *SD*, p. 225.

⁸⁷ *SD*, p. 84. Cf. *SD*, pp. 218–220.

and be acted upon externally,⁸⁸ thus indicating that it is from within the realm of the soul and its struggle to be in union with the will of God, that the substance of action in ministerial life emerges. Lallemand concludes that a Jesuit who focuses his prayer only upon the substance of his day's labours is in error, since this sort of prayer only tires the mind in its effort to glean some insight into God's will. Contemplation should rather be done with a 'freedom of mind', and be initiated from where one feels drawn. Being thus disposed, the Jesuit makes himself more available to a divine gift of virtue or a consolation, which others may not come to without several years of reflecting on 'external acts'.⁸⁹ In short, he says, 'Let us be thoroughly convinced that we shall gain fruit in our ministrations only in proportion to our union with God and detachment from self-interest'.⁹⁰

Lallemand identifies this emphasis upon contemplation and the fruits of union with God as the best means of maintaining what Bremond summarizes as a 'guard of the heart'. It is only with a pure heart that one can be open to the will of God and then lovingly follow it.⁹¹ It is in the heart of each Jesuit that God dwells, and it therefore should be as free from sin as is possible. It is the man's care for his interior life that allows this state, 'which causes God alone to live in hearts, and which causes hearts to live but for God alone, and to take no pleasure save in him'.⁹² Lallemand is said to have proclaimed,

Blessed the life of that heart wherein God reigns, and which he possesses fully! A life separated from the world, and hidden in God; a life of love and holy liberty, a life which causes the heart to find in the kingdom of God its joy, its peace, true pleasures, glory, solid greatness, goods and riches, which the world can neither give nor take away.⁹³

⁸⁸ *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 466. Cf. *SD*, p. 70.

⁸⁹ *SD*, p. 71.

⁹⁰ *SD*, p. 195.

⁹¹ *SD*, p. 131.

⁹² *SD*, p. 41.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

The goal of each Jesuit is thus to have no desire, temptation, feeling or thought in his heart that might oppose ‘God, and the operation of his grace’.⁹⁴ In fact, according to Lallemand, all created things, the very order of nature and divine providence, are disposed in such a manner as to ‘remove from the soul whatever is contrary to God’.⁹⁵ Ultimately, he proposes that a soul may reach a state of ‘complete dominion over its imagination and its powers’, offering them completely to the service of the divine will, and be in a state where it can ‘will nothing, remember nothing, think of nothing, hear nothing, but what has to do with God’.⁹⁶

As we shall see, this ‘critique of action’ and the ‘guarding of the heart’, to which Lallemand may well have introduced Jogues in his novitiate, Brébeuf in spiritual conversation and Le Jeune in Tertianship, correspond to their — and all of the authors’ — understanding of how the lives of the Amerindian peoples suffer without Christ. For, as we shall see in chapter four, the authors conclude that these peoples and their cultures are wrapped up in warped desires for self-gratification, vice and materiality. Their apparent focus on their immediate needs, on the hunt, on comfort, on the satiation of their desires and on retribution, along with their worship of animals or material objects, indicate to the authors how the Amerindians are caught up in the objects and actions of this world.

Their state is, in terms of Lallemand’s interpretation of the *Exercises*, a radical expression of exteriority that is in total opposition to the life of interiority with God in which the authors of the *Relations* were formed. It is this state of the Amerindians’ hearts that leads to their constant thievery, lethargy, wandering, gluttony, licentiousness and violence — including their murder of eight missionaries. The Amerindians are thus presented as being caught up in themselves, filled with blood

⁹⁴ *SD*, p. 96.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *SD*, p. 100.

lust and set on retribution; while the missionaries, facing extreme torture or death, are shown as free from personal desires and lovingly open to the will of God, offering themselves to both their Creator and the peoples they had come to serve. In this sense, an aspect of the rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Relations* is the constant clash between a worldly, self-centred life of exteriority led by the Amerindians and a contemplative, self-offering life of interiority divinely infused into the Jesuits through their experience of the *Exercises* in the ‘school of Louis Lallemant’.

This deeper conversion to a life of contemplation and purity of heart, in which a person can grow in union with God is, in keeping with the *Exercises*, a life bound to Jesus Christ crucified. Lallemant’s influence over the authors on this point is clear. As we shall see in chapter two, the *Relations* present *Nouvelle-France* as ‘The Kingdom of the Cross’, and the authors conjoin their personal efforts at mortification and self-abnegation with the physical trials, calumny and violence they experience in the mission. Lallemant recognizes that ‘The spirit of annihilation shown by the Son of God, in his incarnation, was the model of humility’, a fact that he is described as having lived out for himself, and one that he shared as an insight with those under his direction.⁹⁷ He is described as having been willing to ‘undertake everything and suffer everything, where the interest of God was concerned’ and, to this end, ‘nothing could stop him; neither the difficulties of the enterprise, nor the labour it entailed, nor the opposition of the world, nor considerations of human prudence, nor fear of ill success’.⁹⁸ In fact, Lallemant proposes that the greater the obstacle put before one’s efforts to serve God, and the more one has to endure, the greater the ‘Glory of God’ will be.⁹⁹ Finally, it is his belief that just as the

⁹⁷ *SD*, p. 4.

⁹⁸ *SD*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

redemption of the world came about by the suffering of Christ on his Cross, so too will the work of any Jesuit include a share in that suffering. To this end, he argues,

As our Lord wrought the redemption of the world only by His cross, by His death, and the shedding of His blood, not by His miracles or preaching, so likewise the evangelical labourers apply the grace of redemption only by their crosses, and by the persecutions they suffer. So much so, that no great fruits can be expected from their ministry, if it be not accompanied by contradictions, calumnies, injuries, and sufferings.¹⁰⁰

Lallemant presents this as an authentic disposition for every minister, and it was actualized for him in two ways that we shall also see throughout the *Relations*: first in the Jesuit's own active attempts to annihilate from his interior life, through contemplation, penance, vows and mortifications, anything within himself that prevents his growing union with Jesus Christ; and, second, through a heartfelt acceptance of any external sufferings loaded upon him as he attempted to serve God in his apostolic ventures.¹⁰¹ This view is at the heart of the rhetoric of martyrdom found in the *Relations*, and informs the authors' accounts of their experiences in *Nouvelle-France* as they offer examples of their various struggles as a validation of the divine nature of their labours. They identify their penances and pious offerings to God as the source of many apparent miracles and successes. Gossip against the Jesuits, calumny and open persecution are willingly endured and described as an opportunity for grace. Finally, the threat of death is thought to be the clearest means of building up the fledgling Church among the Amerindians, and when death comes to some of them, it is praised as an event of divine consequence.

The end of this sacrifice is, of course, the salvation not only of the missionaries' souls but, perhaps more importantly, of the Amerindian peoples. As we shall see in chapter four, the authors conclude that, before anything else, it is a connection with Christ in baptism that is of principal importance. To prepare them to

¹⁰⁰ *SD*, pp. 59–60.

¹⁰¹ *SD*, pp. 59, 85, 90, 189.

understand the complexities of Christian doctrine, the Jesuits choose to begin by presenting Jesus Christ and the mysteries of their faith before they do anything else. This is because the authors believe that it is through Christ, regarded as the model of all persons, that the Amerindians will discover their fullest human potential. This, too, is an aspect of their religious world that we can trace back to the school of Louis Lallemand. For the emptying of one's self, the offering of one's whole self to Jesus Christ, is said by Lallemand to transfigure a person utterly:

When a soul has exercised itself well in the love and imitation of the Incarnate Word, God draws it on to the highest degrees of virtue and divine communications; and when He has once taken possession of the interior, and has established His abode therein, He governs from thence the whole [man], interior and exterior, the mind, the heart, the imagination, the appetite, the eyes, the tongue, all the senses. The more Jesus Christ resides within, the more He reveals Himself without, the exterior clothing itself with the perfections of the interior.¹⁰²

Here we see that to clear the heart of all impurities through annihilation and self-offering to God is to prepare it as a seat for Christ, so that his presence within a person governs all that the person is, both in interior and exterior actions. It is in this state, as Bremond suggests, that Lallemand believes one lives by 'the guidance of the Holy Spirit'. It is seen as a state of divine union that provides a 'wonderful knowledge of God', 'rapture', 'ecstasies' and 'extraordinary graces'.¹⁰³ More than this, it is said to provide mystical wisdom about life and the world that far exceeds any knowledge that can be acquired, so that nothing the Jesuits could teach the Amerindians about European life could ever compare with it.¹⁰⁴ This is the state of being for which the authors of the *Relations* hoped, not only for themselves but also for the Amerindian peoples. It is the high bar of 'perfection' that Lallemand presented as they strove to

¹⁰² *SD*, p. 261. Cf. *SD*, p. 132.

¹⁰³ *SD*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁴ *SD*, pp. 19, 63–4, 158, 222.

grow in their own identities as Jesuits, and the one that they in turn set for those they evangelized in *Nouvelle-France*.

Louis Lallemant's approach to the *Exercices* was never published before 1694. He is never mentioned in the *Relations*, and yet the effects of his 'school' are evident in the lives and writings of the authors who chronicled the early evangelical labours of the Jesuits in *Nouvelle-France*. Lallemant's invitation to each Jesuit to step into a new level of interior life filled with both abnegation and great spiritual enlightenment runs parallel to the authors' understanding of their choice to volunteer as missionaries in the New World, a choice encouraged by their spiritual father as the best means for them to achieve a profound union with God. His emphasis on apostolic effectiveness as coming from a Jesuit's interior life with God and remaining continuously detached from the material world in which he labours set a tone for how the authors understood, and indeed denounced, the seeming dependence on material things that they saw in Amerindian life. Lallemant's emphasis on the purity of the heart as the seat of Christ in a person's soul brought about their condemnation of Amerindian practices that ultimately seemed self-centred and contrary to a life of sacrifice, mortification, annihilation and self-abnegation.

Like Lallemant, the authors repeatedly profess throughout the *Relations* that their ministry is bound to the Cross of Christ, and conclude that only in willingly following Christ to the Cross can true spiritual fruits ripen among the Amerindian peoples. And just as Lallemant saw Christ as the source of human fulfilment and the model for all human life, the authors continuously present their belief that, above all, it is in embracing Jesus Christ that the Amerindians will grow as human persons. Interiority and a true vision of the world, self-abnegation and self-discovery, annihilation and union with God, suffering and gift, the Cross of Christ and the fruits

of evangelization: these are the contexts set out by Lallemand's interpretations of the *Exercises* that form the authors' rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Relations*. As I shall show, these shape their religious worldview and produce accounts of *Nouvelle-France* that are ultimately rooted in the inner lives of the Jesuits who wrote them, trained always to remain within themselves, 'never altogether [to] go abroad'.

5. Sacred Scripture and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom

This spiritual formation of the authors was enhanced by their intellectual formation, which included an in-depth and personal exposure to Sacred Scripture. Over the course of their training in France, these Jesuits were asked, through their experience of the *Exercises*, to use their intellect and imagination to enter into various events from the New Testament and to place themselves prayerfully, with all their senses and feeling, into the passages, being attentive to what they themselves might be told or experience, as authentic moments of divine union. These passages, therefore, became a part of the historical imagination of each Jesuit in a lifelong commitment to deepening their personal encounter with God and to living out this encounter in every choice they made. This very personal encounter with Sacred Scripture was then enhanced by three years of strenuous exegetical and theological training meant to provide the very best intellectual interpretation and application of these same texts.

The presence of Sacred Scripture throughout the *Relations* reflects the important place that it had in the lives of the authors. In inserting citations from the Bible into their texts, the authors had to rely on the reference materials they had at hand, along with what they retained in their memories. Passages are included either to help them explain to the readership the religious significance they identify in a particular idea, decision or event, or to buttress conclusions they have drawn from their first observations of the New World. The authors in three ways deploy Sacred

Scripture to reinforce their rhetoric of martyrdom. First, the authors draw analogies between the newly discovered cultures they evangelized and their struggles to evangelize them, and the life of St Paul and the early Christian communities within the Roman Empire. Second, they associate much of their own experience of suffering physical discomforts, calumny, threats to their lives and sometimes death with the life of Jesus Christ found in the New Testament. And, finally, the authors remind the readers, with references to the Passion of Christ, how this suffering is a joy and an opportunity to walk a path towards both personal and communal sanctity.

The exposure of the authors of the *Relations* to the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament as members of the order began in their novitiates, and was no doubt shaped at that time by their intense, month-long period of silent prayer meditating with them in the *Exercises*.¹⁰⁵ They were thus, in their Jesuit life, first exposed to the Bible as a spiritual rather than as an academic exercise, asked to ‘meditate’ on Scripture and to delve into the events portrayed through their mind’s eye, ‘contemplating’ its content in their imaginations, and even entering into ‘colloquy’, or conversation, with different characters found in the prescribed passages, with the idea of deepening their personal union with God.¹⁰⁶ In the *Exercises*, Loyola describes ‘meditating’ as involving the ‘three powers’, referring to faculties of the soul, namely

¹⁰⁵ It was common practice at the time not to provide a Bible for each novice, but rather the series of summaries of different passages from Scripture, interspersed with direct quotations, that Loyola had included in the *Exercises* under the heading of ‘The Mysteries of the Life of Christ our Lord’. Current scholarship concludes that the *Vita Christi* by the Carthusian monk Ludolph of Saxony largely influenced the selection of these fifty-one different scriptural episodes, while Ignatius translated any direct quotations from Sacred Scripture into Spanish; subsequently these passages remained in the vernacular in the *Exercises*. By the end of the sixteenth century, the entire text of the *Exercises* had been translated into multiple languages, including French. See Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster, 1998), p. 191; Paul Shore, ‘The *Vita Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony and its Influence on the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola’, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 30.1 (1998), 1–33.

¹⁰⁶ *SE*, ‘meditate’: [46, 50, 52, 61, 106, and 181]; ‘contemplate’: [46, 52, 53, 58, 61, 90, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 99, 104, 122, 146, 168, 179, 186, 187, and 190]; ‘colloquy’: [53, 54, 58, 60, 74, 153, and 182].

‘memory’, ‘understanding’ and ‘will’.¹⁰⁷ Applying these faculties, persons were called upon to remember any truth about God they might associate with a passage, to explore any content within the passage and to understand its possible purpose or meaning with the intellect and finally, to be attentive to any affective responses of their hearts that might draw their will into action. In ‘contemplating’ the passages from Sacred Scripture, they were asked to use their imaginations to enter personally into the events portrayed, applying all their senses to what they experienced, to interact with and even to participate in the stories as they unfolded. Finally, they were invited to review these experiences by speaking directly to a particular saint, to Mary, the mother of Jesus, or to Christ himself, in a colloquy,

as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant speaks to a master, sharing their experiences and feelings whilst at prayer, seeking for a favour, now blaming himself for some misdeed, now making known his affairs to him and seeking advice in them.¹⁰⁸

Thus when examples from Sacred Scripture are presented in the *Relations*, it must be kept in mind that part of how those passages were understood reflects the authors’ personal interaction with them as, in a certain sense, metaphysical contexts, in which they believed they had encountered God and spoken with him. Through their experience of the *Exercises*, therefore, certain passages were imprinted on their minds and hearts as examples of personal encounters that shaped both their understanding of God and their identities as Christians. Furthermore, as all Jesuits were invited to continue praying with Sacred Scripture in this manner throughout their lives, these experiences of God were meant to deepen continually within them.

¹⁰⁷ Ignatius would have been exposed to several ancient and medieval theories on the faculties of the soul in his time at the University of Paris; however, according to Ivens, in the *Spiritual Exercises* he is understood to be referring particularly to ‘memory’, ‘understanding’ and ‘will’: Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸ SE [54].

In the Jesuits' intellectual formation, this encounter with Sacred Scripture was buttressed in the classroom by the academic study of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, so as further to 'help the souls of its own members and those of their neighbours'.¹⁰⁹ Loyola considered Sacred Scripture to be one of the principal means of bringing persons to 'the knowledge and love of God and to the salvation of their souls', and therefore mandated that 'excellent professors' should be available to instruct students.¹¹⁰ He also ordered that, when possible, the Bible should be studied in all its linguistic forms (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin),¹¹¹ and that each Jesuit's training in this area should be undertaken with a view to, 'preaching the Gospel passages that occur throughout the year [...] lecturing', and matters concerning 'vices, motives for their abhorrence, and their remedies; and good works'.¹¹² These general instructions from the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* took particular form in the *Ratio studiorum*, setting universal norms for every Jesuit's intellectual instruction on the Sacred Scripture. This plan of study insists that every student of theology have at the outset of their theological training a personal copy of Bible made available to him, and that he become well acquainted with its contents.¹¹³

The combination of private meditation and intellectual formation was intended to result in an exposure to the Bible that was both personal and intellectually profound. Affectively formed by their encounter with God, with the life of his Son, Jesus Christ, and with the various characters present throughout the narratives, the

¹⁰⁹ *CSJ* [351].

¹¹⁰ *CSJ* [46].

¹¹¹ *CSJ* [446].

¹¹² *CSJ* [404].

¹¹³ The *Ratio studiorum* mandated that students receive daily instruction in scriptural exegesis for two years [12], using both the Latin Vulgate while always referring to the Greek and Hebrew available to them [152]. They were to pay particular attention to tone and style of the narratives [128], loyally interpret their theological meaning according to canons of popes and councils [154], as well as the writings of the Church Fathers [155] and orthodox theologians [156]. Finally, if a particular passage was at the centre of a theological dispute or a point of contestation with another Christian Church (Lutherans, Calvinists, etc.), they should take the time to study it well [164].

authors of the *Relations* would deploy references to the Bible according to their personal experience in prayer. At the same time they had been trained to understand those references according to the most recent standards of exegesis in Latin, Hebrew and Greek, strictly informed by the prescribed Roman Catholic theology of their time, and with a particular focus on how any passage might build upon their particular ministerial objectives.

That being said, the authors' application of Sacred Scripture throughout the *Relations* was limited by the efficiency of their memories and the modest resources they had at their disposal in *Nouvelle-France*. There is no indication in the *Relations* that between 1632 and 1650 the authors had with them any particular theological writings or biblical commentaries to guide them in their selection of passages from Scripture for the narratives. Nonetheless, having come a great distance to evangelize the Amerindian peoples and to minister to the French among them, the priests did clearly have several copies of the *Roman Missal* to say Mass and to administer other sacraments, along with Catholic lectionaries for the prescribed Scripture readings required for those rituals. Although the Jesuits were exempt from praying the Divine Office in common, a practice required of all other religious women and men at the time, they were obliged to do so privately.¹¹⁴ The fact that the missionaries had copies with them is verified by their own reference to praying it.¹¹⁵ It is therefore possible that they included in their narratives passages taken from the psalms or from the New Testament that were more easily found within its pages. Nevertheless, while travelling among the different villages or carrying their canoes across difficult terrain, it would seem plausible that instead of carrying the larger volume around, they might have carried a copy of the *Little Office of Our Lady*, an abridged form of the *Divine Office*

¹¹⁴ CSJ [586].

¹¹⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 191.

dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹¹⁶ Indeed, Isaac Jogues counts it among the three possessions he had while a prisoner of the Iroquois in 1642.¹¹⁷ Thus the authors had Bibles, the *Roman Missal*, lectionaries, the Divine Office, and the *Little Office of Our Lady*, along with what they had retained in the mind from their extensive training, from which to draw Sacred Scripture into the *Relations*.

The principal dichotomy in the rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Relations*, between selflessness and selfishness, is influenced by Sacred Scripture. Passages from the Bible are cited to enhance or to reinforce conclusions regarding either the Amerindians' willingness to take the step towards embracing Christianity, no matter what the cost, or their failure to do so. Vimont refers to two Amerindian brothers who, despite much opposition, had embraced the Christian life as being like the 'sons of Thunder': their fortitude in the faith should remind the reader of the apostles James and John, who were given this name by Christ himself (Mark 3:17).¹¹⁸

Le Jeune similarly refers to a group of young Amerindian Christians who refused to participate in a ritual war feast as being like 'brave athletes', alluding to St Paul's analogy for the Christian who must 'run with perseverance the race that is set before us'; just as the early Christians had to endure the struggles and persecutions that come with the faith, so too did these young men (Hebrews 12:1–2).¹¹⁹ Lalemant,

¹¹⁶ The *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary* is thought to have been developed by the English scholar and priest Alcuin of York (735–804) during his time as a leading intellectual at the Carolingian court. Having encouraged a strong devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, he helped to develop the tradition of special votary Masses to her on Saturdays during the liturgical year. It is thought that the practice was extended to include this abridged form of the *Divine Office* in which the usual psalms, canticles and readings from Scripture (though presented in a simpler form) are set alongside prayers and devotional readings in honour of Mary. The well-known reformer and Benedictine Peter Damian (1007–1072) strongly encouraged the recitation of this office, and by the twelfth century it was often made an obligatory part of the daily prayers of monks, nuns and the secular clergy. In 1568, Pope Pius V (r. 1566–1572) removed this obligation, yet many religious, secular clergy and laity continued to pray it as an act of devotion. This was particularly true in France. Cf. L. Eisenhoffer and J. Lechner, *The Liturgy of the Roman Rite*, trans. A. J. and E. F. Peeler (New York, 1961), pp. 473–74; J. H. Miller, *The Fundamentals of the Liturgy* (Indiana, 1960), pp. 343–44.

¹¹⁷ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 294.

¹¹⁸ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), pp. 34–35.

¹¹⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 57–58.

moved by the generous hospitality of an Amerindian who had yet to be baptized, likens him to the Samaritan in the Gospels who, having been healed by Jesus along with a number of Jewish men, was the only one to leave joyfully declaring the miracle to be an act of God (Luke 17:18). The author of the *Relation* asks, through the words of the Gospel, is ‘there no one to give praise to God except this foreigner’?¹²⁰ He also suggests that, though the reader might consider non-Christian Amerindians as ‘foreigners’ to the faith, many nonetheless already honour God through their love for others. In another instance, Le Jeune suggests that, unlike Nicodemus in the Gospel of St John, who hid his faith and would only come to see Jesus under the cover of night, one Amerindian Christian had refused to hide his faith, choosing instead to proclaim it publicly, despite much opposition from his friends and family (John 3:2).¹²¹

Throughout the narratives, the authors superimpose upon their experience of evangelization their own knowledge and contemplative experience of the early Christian communities described in Sacred Scripture: a practice that, as I shall show in chapter two, is consistent with the general tendency of many early modern Christian humanists to draw parallels between the ancient world and their own. Le Jeune advised his missionaries to proceed in their evangelical labours imitating ‘St Peter and St Paul’.¹²² Similarly, he proposes that, as in the ‘primitive Church’, catechumens in good health should have four to five years of instruction before they are baptized.¹²³

Yet it is in the persecution experienced by the missionaries that the comparison comes to the fore. Le Jeune, associating the various forms of persecution with the work of the Devil, and equating this struggle with a spiritual battle, argues

¹²⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), pp. 178–79.

¹²¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 122–23.

¹²² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 186.

¹²³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 67.

that the ‘bloodier a battle is, the nobler the victory and the more glorious the triumph’.¹²⁴ He concludes that ‘The more this infant Church has in common with the primitive one, the greater hope it gives us of seeing it produce flowers and fruits worthy of paradise’: an association between suffering and union with Christ crucified that we have already seen to be an element of Louis Lallemant’s influence on the authors.¹²⁵ In the same *Relation*, the author reaffirms this belief, observing that

All the misfortunes, all the pests, wars, and famines which in the early ages of the infant Church afflicted the world, were formerly attributed to the faith of Jesus Christ, and to those who embraced or preached it. What occurred in this regard in the primitive Church can be seen every day in New France.¹²⁶

Vimont, taking a similar view, compares the courage and zeal of one lay Frenchman in *Nouvelle-France* to that seen among the Christians in ‘Apostolic times’.¹²⁷ Many Amerindians, he writes, who accept baptism, have experienced ‘scourges’ and ‘reproaches’, such as were ‘encountered in the primitive Church’.¹²⁸ Furthermore, in keeping with the author’s views on the active role of God in the mission, he surmises that ‘God is the founder of this Church, as well as of the primitive one’.¹²⁹

Throughout the narratives, the tension between the authors’ hope for all to be baptized into a Christian way of life and the Amerindians’ desire to continue in their own traditions is said to result in the missionaries being distrusted, rejected, threatened, physically assaulted, tortured and, in some cases, brutally murdered. As we shall see in chapter two, this correlation, compounded by the general discomforts of living in the New World at that time, forms much of the substance of the rhetoric of martyrdom in these texts. Scripture is used to render this all the more poignant. In 1636, Brébeuf wrote in his *Relation* of the danger to his life that he faced every day;

¹²⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 1.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 207.

¹²⁷ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 13.

¹²⁸ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 279.

¹²⁹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 2.

but he quickly linked his burden to the words of Christ found in the Gospel of John and to the epistles of St Paul. The missionary reminds his readers that ‘there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life, verily once and for all, for one’s friends’ (John 15:13); he then immediately quotes St Paul, ‘Through the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord, I die every day for you’ (1 Corinthians 15:31).¹³⁰

In constructing his reflection on suffering to include these passages, Brébeuf identifies suffering as an act of love and friendship for the Amerindian peoples. He alludes to the love of Christ manifested in his willingness to die on the Cross. And he suggests that, though his own daily experiences bring about a kind of death, he chooses nonetheless to embrace them for the sake of the people he has come to serve. Some pages later, he again relies on Scripture to emphasize the nature both of his predicament and of his response, when, despite everything, he professes not to be afraid, for, as the psalmist wrote, ‘I will fear no evil, for you [God] are with me’ (Psalm 23:4).¹³¹ Similarly, in Vimont’s account of Jogues’ first imprisonment among the Iroquois, the captive is made to compare himself to Jonah, when, caught in a storm brought on by God’s wrath, the prophet is said to have cast himself into the sea so as to save the crew (Jonah 1:12).¹³² In making this reference, Jogues portrays his own willingness to die as a kind of oblation, in which every blow inflicted upon him, even death itself, would eventually bring about redemption for all Amerindians, including the men and women who were inflicting his tortures.

When faced with the violent murder of one Amerindian Christian in his congregation and the abduction of two others, Vimont draws the same conclusion, and then associates the suffering of these Christians with that of St Paul, who is said

¹³⁰ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 75.

¹³¹ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 78. See also a similar idea supported by Brébeuf’s use of the First Epistle to Timothy (1: 1–12) to affirm his idea that when someone serves God, he or she should not fear any dangers: Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 77.

¹³² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 296.

to have suffered shipwrecks, perilous journeys, bandits, angry Jews and Gentiles, as well as the calumny of apostates (2 Corinthian 11:25–26). Yet, he continues, ‘when the Jews saw Jesus dead, they did not expect to see released from his blood an army of Christian giants’.¹³³ The sufferings of the missionaries and their Christian community will likewise bear fruit. Lalemant takes a similar tack, applying the words of Jesus Christ found in the Gospel of St John: ‘The Servant is not greater than the Master’ (John 13:16). To walk in *Nouvelle-France* with Christ was to share in a life that was like his, the life of a suffering servant (Isaiah 52: 13).¹³⁴

The calumny that arises against the Jesuits, the ostracism that some Amerindians feel from their peers for having embraced the Christian faith, even threats of violence against the missionaries, are also sometimes subsumed into the authors’ understanding of this divine providence and mingled with Scripture. For example, Jérôme Lalemant tells of an Amerindian Christian who lost three of his children to a disease plaguing their village; yet despite his entire family’s ardent belief that it was his faith in Christ that had caused this disaster, he refused to abandon his newfound faith. To accentuate the meaning that the author placed upon this constancy, Lalemant compares the man to Job, whose wife counselled him to ‘curse God and morality’ for having allowed the loss of almost everything he held dear (Job 2:9).¹³⁵ Like Job, the Amerindian man would not do so, and instead is said to have gone to the chapel, to ‘offer him [God] quite anew all the children whom he had left’. Here again, the author suggests a divine purpose to the Amerindian’s suffering, perhaps even divine instigation, just as there was believed to be in the plight of Job, and Lalemant praises him for his faith amidst this suffering. Finally, when some of the Jesuits themselves become ill, they embrace the sickness and, though they do not

¹³³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 175–77.

¹³⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), pp. 172–73.

¹³⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640), pp. 125–26.

die, they considered it to be of divine origin and part of God's providence. Stating that 'man cannot live on bread alone' (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4), the authors seek to diminish any concern the readership might have for their temporal health while accentuating the spiritual benefits that come from enduring their sickness, calling it a singular favour and 'altogether desirable'.¹³⁶

Thus the authors of the *Relations* apply both their personal experience of, and their training in, Scripture to their narratives. Relying upon their memory and their encounter with the texts as they prayed with the *Exercises* as well as on copies of the Latin Vulgate, their *Roman Missals*, lectionaries, and prayer books, they wove passages from Sacred Scripture into their accounts. They used these passages as a means of both interpreting for themselves and explaining to the readership their experience of *Nouvelle-France* in the light of their religious worldview. From within their experience of Sacred Scripture they draw parallels between themselves and some of their newly baptized Christians, and the early apostles.

The people whom they had come to serve are compared to persons and events in the Bible, suggesting that selfishness and ignorance about God form a kind of 'blindness' or 'darkness' that could only be overcome by embracing Jesus Christ. Similes are employed, comparing Amerindian Christians to noble figures in the New Testament who bravely and consistently upheld their faith amidst great adversities; others are said to be like the followers of Christ who only sought material gain from his miraculous power. Indeed, the entire missionary presence in the New World, and the Amerindians who choose to accept their Christian teachings, are compared to the proto-Christian communities found within Sacred Scripture. The authors identify a rising persecution directed against both themselves and their flock and, through their

¹³⁶ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 73.

use of passages from the Bible, they emphasize how the readership should expect nothing less, and boldly profess that their sufferings unite them with Jesus Christ. Believing they have been sent to *Nouvelle-France* on a divine mission of metaphysical consequence for both themselves and the Amerindian peoples, and profoundly associating the success of this enterprise with self-sacrifice, the authors link the narratives of the *Relations* with those of Sacred Scripture, enhancing the force of the rhetoric of martyrdom in their accounts.

6. Thomas à Kempis and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom

As we have seen, the imperative towards self-sacrifice in the *Relations*, rooted in the authors' experience of the *Exercices*, interpreted through the school of Louis Lallemand and supported by Sacred Scripture, was driven by their desire to share in Christ's role as a suffering servant for the peoples that they had come to evangelize. In his 1636 *Relation*, while outlining 'Important Advice for all those whom it shall please God to send to New France', Brébeuf reminds the reader that anyone who comes must be aware of 'the pains, the labours, and the difficulties which are inseparable from these evangelical functions', and immediately reiterates this point by stating that 'I will show him how great the things are that he must suffer for Jesus'.¹³⁷ This link between sacrifice and success, choosing to labour with Christ and to endure the suffering that accompanies that choice, permeates the *Relations* as the central ideal in its rhetoric of martyrdom. This quotation, inserted by Brébeuf, is found both in the New Testament and in the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis. The possibility that the author is citing it from this last text is, however, clear, since he refers to it directly in this same *Relation*; and, after his death, Ragueneau included

¹³⁷ The original text reads: '*Ostendam illi quanta hic oporteat pro nomine Iesu pati*' in Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 59. This citation can be traced to both Acts 9:16, and the 'The Royal Road of the Holy Cross' in the *Imitatio*. Cf. *Imitatio*, II, 12.

passages from the private journal of the veteran missionary which reveal it to be a text he consulted while at prayer.¹³⁸

Though it is Brébeuf who directly refers to the text and Ragueneau who reveals that Brébeuf had a copy on hand, it is reasonable to conclude that all of the authors had similar access to it. The *Imitatio* was, as it were, a ‘must read’ for the Jesuits at that time, and remains to this day an important component of the order’s spiritual tradition.¹³⁹ In his autobiography, Loyola describes the essential effect of the text on his own spiritual renewal.¹⁴⁰ He gives it a privileged place in his *Exercises*, suggesting that ‘During the Second Week, and thereafter, it will be very profitable to read some passages from the “Following of Christ” [*Imitatio*], or from the Gospels, and from the *Lives of the Saints*’.¹⁴¹

As the Jesuit order grew, and its practices became formalized, Jerónimo Nadal (1507–1580), secretary to Loyola, encouraged its members to have the *Imitatio* read at dinner in every house, while the fourth general, Everard Mercurian (1514–1580) ordered in 1580 that it be a recommended reference in the manual produced for masters of novices.¹⁴² As Maximilian von Habsburg has noted, the importance of the text among Jesuits is demonstrated by the fact that, while the first official translation of the *Exercises* into the vernacular was not published until 1615, by that date, Jesuit scholars had already translated the *Imitatio* into multiple languages from around the world.¹⁴³ The text was translated into Japanese, for example, in 1575 and later revised

¹³⁸ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 66–68; Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649), p. 62.

¹³⁹ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp. 264–66.

¹⁴⁰ Autobiography [29].

¹⁴¹ *SE* [100].

¹⁴² Ignatius Loyola, ‘Regulae Societatis Iesu 1540–56’, in *Monumenta Ignatiana*, Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 71 (Rome, 1948), pp. 155–62.

¹⁴³ Maximilian von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi* (Franham, 2011), p. 181. Cf. Peter Burke, ‘Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe’, in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by R. Po-Chia Hsia (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 15–16.

by Martino Hara (c. 1570–1629) in 1610.¹⁴⁴ The first French Jesuit to translate the text is thought to have been the renowned theologian and preacher Édmon Auger (1530–1591) in 1573, with a further edition produced by his colleague Michel Jove in 1576, and another in 1578 with the help of Jean Pillehotte.¹⁴⁵ Antoine Vivien (1566–1623) prepared yet another edition in 1620, with reprints in 1629 and 1647.¹⁴⁶ According to von Habsburg, the leading Latin edition was prepared by the Jesuit scholar Henricus Sommalius (1534–1619) and printed in Antwerp in 1599.¹⁴⁷ This version, reprinted over several years, became the standard Latin translation, which was also printed in Paris (1619) and at the Jesuit Collège de la Flèche in 1624.¹⁴⁸ It is likely that Brébeuf used one of these latter two editions, since every reference that he makes is in Latin.

The *Imitatio* is a reflection of a fourteenth-century religious reform movement in the Catholic Church known as the *Devotio Moderna*, established by the Dutch deacon Gerard Groot (1340–1384), which aimed at encouraging lay Christians, poor and rich alike, to live a life of humility, obedience, good works and simplicity.¹⁴⁹ After having been exposed to Groot's teachings and encountering the members of his Brethren of the Common Life in Deventer in the Netherlands, in 1399 Kempis became a canon regular at the Monastery of Mount Saint Agnes in Zwolle. He set out

¹⁴⁴ J. F. Moan, *The Japanese Translations of the Jesuit Mission Press, 1590–1614* (Lewiston, 2002), pp. 1–2.

¹⁴⁵ von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, p. 183; Édmon Auger, *Jean Gerson de l'Imitation de Jesus-Christ* (Lyon, 1577).

¹⁴⁶ Antoine Vivien, *IV Livres de l'Imitation de Jesus-Christ Composer par Thomas de Kempis* (Toulouse, 1620); Antoine Vivien, *IV Livres de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ Composer par Thomas de Kempis* (l'Aulne, 1629); Antoine Vivien, *III Livres de l'Imitation de Jesus-Christ Composer par Thomas de Kempis, et traduits du latin, confrerés, corrigés par le P. Antoine Vivien de la Compagnie de Jesus, quatrième édition* (Toulouse, 1647); Antoine Vivien, *Livres de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ composés jadis par le V. P. Thomas de Kempis, traduits de nouveau du latin, et corrigés par le P. A. Vivien, de la Compagnie de Jésus. Dernière éditions* (Lyon, 1657).

¹⁴⁷ *Thomae a Kempis, Canonica regularis Ordinis D. Augustini, de Imitatio Christi libri quatuor, ad autographum emendati opera et studio Henrici Sommalii e Societate Jesu* (Antwerp, 1599).

¹⁴⁸ von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, p. 186.

¹⁴⁹ von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, p. 7.

to write the *Imitatio* as a devotional manual for the Christian life, and completed it in c. 1418.¹⁵⁰

The text emphasizes a withdrawal from worldliness, and the centrality of the Eucharist as the essential context in which to move towards a greater union with Jesus Christ, whose life should be the model of every human life. The first of the text's four books, 'Helpful Counsels of the Spiritual Life', invites the reader to move away from the distractions of the world — filled as it is with illusions, material attachments, vanity and temptations — so as to undertake, with the help of silence and solitude, an inner pilgrimage towards a life rooted in Christ.¹⁵¹ The second book, 'Directives for the Interior Life', outlines the qualities of patience, purity of heart, moderation, the quelling of inordinate attachment to personal desires or things, adherence to the will of God, love for Christ and the option of willingly taking up the Cross and suffering along with Christ for the sake of the world.¹⁵² In the third book, 'On Interior Consolation', written as a dialogue between Jesus and the 'disciple', Kempis suggests that the more one can leave oneself behind on this pilgrimage, taking into oneself the life of Christ, the more personal renunciation unites one with God, the truer the 'life that you are to hope for'.¹⁵³ Finally, in book four, 'On the Blessed Sacrament', which continues this dialogue, Jesus tells readers that the sooner they resign themselves to God, the more contented they will be, and emphasizes the importance of the Eucharist as what best prepares the soul for this primary disposition of life.¹⁵⁴ In the light of the present study, the similarity between these four books, the four main *foci* of Louis Lallemant's *Spiritual Doctrine* and the four Weeks of the *Exercises* is striking.

¹⁵⁰ John H. Van Engen, *Devotio Moderna* (New Jersey, 1988), pp. 7–12.

¹⁵¹ *Imitatio*, I, 1, 6, 9, 13, 17, 20, 25.

¹⁵² *Imitatio*, II, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12.

¹⁵³ *Imitatio*, III, 27, 37, 41, 44, 56, 59.

¹⁵⁴ *Imitatio*, IV, 2, 3, 4, 11.

In his 1636 *Relation* Brébeuf cites book two, part nine, of the *Imitatio*, entitled ‘Of Want of All Solace’, advising any Jesuit who might want to come to *Nouvelle-France* that he will find there only suffering, but that this suffering is a great consolation and that ‘He rides at ease, whom the grace of God carries’.¹⁵⁵ The missionary’s reference to Kempis is made in an attempt to make it very clear that there are no comforts for any Jesuit in *Nouvelle-France* except that of knowing that one’s labours and desires to serve are sustained by God. He explains that the support of the ‘good example’ among many Christians, the ‘solemnity of Feasts’, adorned churches and ‘piety’ found in their own country, is absent from *Nouvelle-France*. Instead, one finds only the Amerindians’ astonishment at the very mention of God, ‘horrible blasphemies’ and the ‘danger of ruining oneself among their impurities’.¹⁵⁶ And yet, he continues, ‘It is your whole consolation to see yourself crucified with the Son of God’.¹⁵⁷ The author thus identifies with the idea of Kempis that the only true comfort in life comes in serving God; when one realizes this, any divinely inspired duty and any suffering that arises from it are borne with ease. Furthermore, Brébeuf argues that the inevitable suffering that comes from labouring in *Nouvelle-France* should by no means be considered a deterrent but rather a blessing, since he himself has found only consolation in enduring these afflictions.¹⁵⁸

After Brébeuf’s death, Ragueneau wrote a chapter in his 1648–49 *Relation* dedicated to the ‘Life of Father Jean de Brébeuf’. In this necrology, he included several passages from the veteran missionary’s private journal. In one of these, Brébeuf had written:

¹⁵⁵ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 68. The Latin passages reads: ‘Suaviter navigat quem gratia Dei Portat’, taken from the *Imitatio*, II, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 65–66.

¹⁵⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 67.

¹⁵⁸ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 66.

Many crosses appeared to me, all of which I very willingly embraced. On the following night, while in prayer [...] I took in hand the little book of the Imitation of Christ and, without design, I fell upon the chapter, *De regiâ viâ sanctae crucis*. From that time I felt in my soul a great peace, and repose in occasions of suffering.¹⁵⁹

It is worth highlighting the key ideas presented in this chapter, since Kempis outlines a theological perspective on the Cross of Jesus Christ that, as we shall see later, bears great similarity to the rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Relations*. Kempis begins by suggesting that

In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection from enemies, in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit, in the cross is highest virtue, in the cross is perfect holiness. There is no salvation of soul nor hope of everlasting life but in the cross.¹⁶⁰

The Cross is therefore not something to be feared, but rather embraced. Kempis argues that the way of Christ was to die on his Cross; and to follow Christ is to take up your own Cross and willingly do the same out of love for him. Even with the most ordered life, there is no way to avoid the Cross: it ‘awaits you everywhere’. Once this is realized and acknowledged, Kempis continues, ‘you will find a cross in everything’, and if this is patiently accepted, ‘you will have peace within and merit an eternal crown’ — perhaps the peace that Brébeuf wrote about in his journal?¹⁶¹ Moreover, Kempis suggests that a person of deep faith might even find it difficult to live without the crosses in life, since to do so is, as it were, to live contrarily to the life that Christ led on the earth. Rather, one should stand ready to accept them with patience, as a ‘good and faithful servant’.¹⁶² Finally, he advises the reader to realize that you must lead a ‘dying life’, and ‘the more a man dies to himself, the more he begins to live unto God’.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648-1649), p. 62.

¹⁶⁰ *Imitatio*, II, 9.

¹⁶¹ *Imitatio*, II, 9.

¹⁶² *Imitatio*, II, 10.

¹⁶³ *Imitatio*, II, 14.

Brébeuf's comment suggests that he agreed with the main point of this passage: that the life of the suffering Christ is the model for all people. Furthermore, in understanding every adversity faced in *Nouvelle-France* as a cross that, if embraced, might bring about greater personal sanctity, he was elevating his experiences in the New World to a spiritual plane of encounter with the crucified Christ. As we will see in chapter two, all of the authors, at one point or another, describe their sufferings in a similar manner, and describe the land in which they labour as 'The Kingdom of the Cross'. They all felt that the sufferings they faced, whether the result of natural causes, cultural differences or human frailty, were an opportunity to grow in their union with God and a vehicle of grace that might bring about the conversion of the Amerindian peoples to the Christian faith. The important place given to the *Imitatio* during the authors' training, its presence in *Nouvelle-France*, and its appearance in the *Relations* suggest that the vision of life that Kempis proposes in his work partly shaped their religious worldview. Moreover, his invitation to a life of interiority that is 'pure of heart' and detached from ambition, vice or material possessions, following Jesus Christ and bound to his Cross, as we shall see, corresponds to the vision presented by the authors in their rhetoric of martyrdom.

7. The Influence of Francis Xavier, the Missions to Japan, and José de Acosta on the Rhetoric of Martyrdom

In his 1640 *Relation*, Le Jeune proclaims that the great treasure of faith in God is meant to inflame the hearts of those throughout the entire world, even to 'the remotest confines of the earth, even to the farthest boundaries of America and to the Islands of Japan'.¹⁶⁴ This impassioned vision reveals to the reader of the *Relations* not only the sheer scope of their apostolic ambitions, but also their exposure to the lore, letters,

¹⁶⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 138.

books and general information about other evangelical projects around the globe. From India, Mozambique, Malaysia, Japan and China in Asia, to Paraguay, Paraná, and Uruguay in Latin America, Jesuits chronicled the missionary labours of their men. Le Jeune, Brébeuf and Jérôme Lalemant all refer directly to the first Jesuit missionary and ‘apostle to the Indies’, Francis Xavier (1506–1552), as either a model for their efforts or as a saint to be invoked in their prayers. As we shall see, his example included a disposition towards radical availability, sacrifice and affinity to the Cross of Christ, which had been highlighted by early modern French Jesuit authors including Louis Lallemant. Furthermore, these authors make some important comparisons between the Amerindian peoples of Latin America and those of *Nouvelle-France*. The emphasis in the various texts from the Jesuit missions on self-sacrifice, a unity with Christ crucified, the raising up of the human condition in union with God, and the cosmic battle with Satan for souls in the New World are echoed in the *Relations* and form the very substance of the rhetoric of martyrdom employed by the authors.

The global epistolary exchange between Jesuits and its effects on generations of missionaries began with the extraordinary life of Xavier.¹⁶⁵ As John O’Malley has written, Xavier sent letters from Asia to Europe that ‘electrified his brethren and everyone else who read them’. The extent of his travels to exotic places, hitherto largely unknown to Europeans, made him the ‘prototypical’ missionary for future

¹⁶⁵ For a historical overview of the Jesuit missions to Asia see: *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Mateo Ricci, 1583–1610*, trans. by Louis J. Gallagher (New York, 1953); Vincent Cronin, *A Pearl to India: The Life of Roberto de Nobili* (New York, 1959); Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan* (Berkeley, 1967); *Francis Xavier: His Life and His Times*, trans. by M. Joseph Costelloe, 4 vols (Rome, 1973–82); Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York, 1984); *Preaching Wisdom to the Wise: Three Treatises by Robert de Nobili, S.J.: Missionary and Scholar in the 17th Century*, trans. by Anand Amaldass, et al. (St Louis, 2000); R. Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552–1610* (Oxford, 2010); and Mary Laven, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East* (London, 2011).

generations of men in the order.¹⁶⁶ A close friend of Loyola, and one of the founding members of the Jesuit order, Xavier is said to have immediately accepted his General Superior's request to evangelize the millions of inhabitants in Portuguese India.¹⁶⁷ This impression of radical availability was strengthened by his perceived willingness to embrace any hardships that came in preaching Jesus Christ. For example, in his 1549 letter to the Portuguese Jesuit Simão Rodrigues (1510–1579), he writes that if one 'takes on these hardships for the sake of Him [Jesus Christ] for whom we should bear them, then they will turn into sources of great refreshment', a reflection that, as we shall see, inspired Brébeuf eighty seven years later.¹⁶⁸ It was, however, his zeal that was thought most inspiring. The missionary not only worked diligently as the superior of the missions in Goa and India but, upon hearing about Japan, expanded his labours to spend three years there attempting to learn the language, to catechize and to baptize, and then turned his attention to China. Dying in December 1552 of exhaustion, only fourteen kilometres from the Chinese mainland, Xavier thus became a model of availability, self-sacrificing love and zeal, and a hero among the Jesuits aspiring to the foreign missions.

The letters of Xavier served to inform Loyola of his work in Asia, but they were soon disseminated in published tracts and anthologies, read by Jesuits and a growing readership beyond the order.¹⁶⁹ Plays were written in the Jesuit colleges that presented him as the heroic forerunner of the missions, working miracles, banishing the Devil from Japan and continuing to intercede for the Christians of that kingdom

¹⁶⁶ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 30. See also J. Michelle Molina, *To Overcome One's Self: The Jesuit Ethic and Spirit of Global Expansion* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, 2013), pp. 94–97, 151.

¹⁶⁷ Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁸ *The Life and Letters of Francis Xavier*, translated by Henry J. Coleridge (London, 1872), p. 92.

¹⁶⁹ *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Donnelly, pp. 65–66.

who suffered untold persecution.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, prints, statues and paintings of the missionary to Asia filled Jesuit churches both in Europe and the Americas.¹⁷¹ From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jesuits in France began to publish long excerpts from Xavier's letters, and to translate accounts of his life from Italian, Spanish and Latin into French, while others wrote their own biographies, a process no doubt precipitated by his canonization, alongside Loyola, in 1622.¹⁷² Louis Lallemand regarded Xavier as a model of zeal, humility, prudence, courage, eloquence, wisdom and patient suffering for Christ.¹⁷³ And it should be noted that the patron of the novitiate in Paris where both Le Jeune and Jérôme Lalemant began their religious life was St Francis Xavier.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ For example, the *Evangelización del Japón*, performed in 1578 at the Jesuit College in Mexico City (cf. Molina, *To Overcome One's Self*, p. 153) or *De christianis apud Iaponios triumphis*, first performed in 1623 at the eighteen schools of the Southern Netherlands (cf. Goran Proot and Johan Verberckmoes, 'Japonica in the Jesuit Drama of the Southern Netherlands', *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, 5 [December 2002], 27–47).

¹⁷¹ Soon after the canonization of Ignatius and Xavier in 1622, Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) produced a series of engravings including a depiction of Xavier writing to Ignatius from India. See *The Rubens Engravings of the Life of Ignatius*, ed. by Jan Graffius (Stonyhurst, 2005), no. 59. Depictions of Xavier in various media can be found in *The Jesuits and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. by John W. O'Malley, et al. (Philadelphia, 2003).

¹⁷² E.g. Horace Turselin, *La Vie du bien-heureux Père François Xavier, premier de la Compagnie de Jésus, qui a porté l'évangile aux Indes et au Japon* (Douai, 1608.); Orazio Torsellini, *La Vie du bien-heureux Père François Xavier, qui le premier de la Compagnie de Jésus, a presché le S. Evangile aux Indiens: et devant tout autre, aux Japonois*, trans. by Horace Turselin and Michael Coyssard (Lyon, 1612); Pierre d'Outreman, *Tableaux des personnages signalez de la Compagnie de Jésus. Exposez en la solennité de la canonization des SS. PP. Ignace, et François Xavier* (Douay, 1623); Orazio Torsellini, *Lettres du B. Pere Saint François Xavier, de la Compagnie de Iesus, Apostre du Japon*, trans. by François Solier (Paris, 1628).

¹⁷³ In his *Spiritual Doctrine*, Lallemand suggested that holiness in Jesuit life required crosses like those carried by Francis Xavier (p. 60); Xavier is praised for his zeal (p. 74), his humility (p. 76); his willingness to embrace suffering (pp. 125, 188); his courage (pp. 167, 187, 311); and his eloquence and wisdom inspired by God (pp. 186, 312).

¹⁷⁴ Patricia M. Ranum's study of the *Instructions pour le Novitiat* (1685) indicates that the text, written to help the novices' introduction into Jesuit life, was in fact an articulation of traditions that had developed since founding of the novitiate in July 1610 (pp. 2–4). It contains two references to the house's patron saint. First, the novices are encouraged not to dislike manual labour since Xavier, with the rank of papal legate, had said, 'As long as I have these two hands, I will make no one work' (p. 65). And second, Xavier is presented as a model of prayer, spending hours in the night before the Blessed Sacrament (p. 101): Patricia M. Ranum, *Beginning to Be a Jesuit: Instructions for the Paris Novitiate circa 1685* (St Louis, 2011).

Between 1632 and 1651, Xavier is directly mentioned in the *Relations* on three different occasions.¹⁷⁵ The most revealing of these examples is found in Chapter Three of Brébeuf's 1636 letter, entitled 'Important Advice for Those Whom It Shall Please God to Send to New France'. Here, Brébeuf describes the constant threat of unforeseen death that the missionaries face every day among the *Hurons* as a labour of love. In this context, he quotes a line from the letter that Xavier wrote from India to Simão Rodrigues in Portugal, in which he proclaims: 'we have also the best of news from the Moluccas. Joam Beira [the Jesuit missionary João Rodrigues of Beira (1562–1634)] and his companions are working under great hardships and in perpetual danger of life, to the great increase of the Christian faith'.¹⁷⁶ The positioning of this quotation and its use reveal three aspects of Brébeuf's own devotion to the great proto-missionary of the Jesuits. First, this reference is located in a section of the *Relation* that is meant to inform Jesuits who aspire to join the mission, and evokes the established assumption in the order that to be a good missionary is to follow the example of Xavier. Second, like Xavier, who described the trials of his companions as 'the best of news', Brébeuf suggests to his readership that his own suffering in *Nouvelle-France* is noble and good.¹⁷⁷ Finally, Xavier makes a correlation between the 'great hardships' of the Jesuits and the 'great increase of the Christian faith'. As I

¹⁷⁵ Le Jeune refers to Xavier on two occasions. In 1636, he mentions that all the missionaries made a vow to name a dying Amerindian girl after Xavier if the saint would intercede by ensuring that she be baptized before her imminent death: Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 78–79. In 1639, he mentions the emphasis that Xavier often placed on the intercessory prayers of the saints in the Jesuits' effort at evangelization: Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 59–60. In 1642, Lalemant suggests that the more he reads about the struggles of Xavier in bringing about true conversions in India, the more he feels that Amerindians are better suited to embrace Christianity: Lalemant, *Hurons* (1642), pp. 75–76.

¹⁷⁶ The original text reads: 'Optimi Moluco perferuntur nuntii, quippe in maximis ærumnis perpetuisque vitæ, discriminibus, Joannes Beira eiusque socii versantur, magno cum Christianæ Religionis incremento', in Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 75–76. The original letter dated 2 February 1549 can be consulted in: *Epistolæ S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta*, ed. by G. Schurhammer (Rome, 1945), pp. 66–80. The quotation discussed here, and used by Brébeuf, is found on p. 77. For a good English translation of this letter, see *The Life and Letters of Francis Xavier*, trans. by Coleridge, p. 92.

¹⁷⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 75.

shall show in chapter two, this association between suffering and grace, or the joy of suffering in the service of Christ and the fruits that it bears for the mission, is a theme taken up by all the authors in the *Relations*, a theme that is part of the rhetoric of martyrdom in the texts.

In the 1626 translation of Xavier's letters, ascribed to the French Jesuit François Solier (1558–1638) and commissioned by the Jesuit Fathers of the Professed House of St Francis Xavier in Bordeaux, his suffering on mission, and particularly his association with the Cross of Jesus Christ, is a dominant theme. The prayer and introduction at the beginning of this four-volume work illustrate the religious context in which the French Jesuits understood the life of the missionary, and perhaps also express the way in which the authors of the *Relations* might have associated their labours with his. More than that, they reflect a religious worldview that we will see was part of those authors' own narratives. The prayer reminds readers that it is in the life of Christ that one finds 'the origin and idea, the first efficient and final cause of holiness', and suggests that only in the name of Christ can all be saved.¹⁷⁸ This part of the prayer speaks to a major theme that I shall examine in chapter four, in relation to how the Jesuits consistently associate the fulfilment of Amerindian life with the embracing of Christ.

In their introduction to the text, the Fathers of the professed house write that Xavier faced many 'demons' while labouring in the Far East, and that when he encountered the ancient wisdom of India, it was the 'humility of the cross' that transformed the hearts of converts.¹⁷⁹ The idea that Satan reigns in lands yet to be evangelized, whether in Asia or the Americas, and, as the author suggests here, that

¹⁷⁸The original text reads: 'l'Origine et l'Idée, la première cause efficiente final de la Sainteté' in *Lettres du B. Pere Saint Francois Xavier*, trans. by François Solier (Paris, 1626), sig. Ai.

¹⁷⁹ The original text reads 'l'humilité de la croix' in Solier, *Lettres du B. Pere Saint Francois Xavier*, introduction.

the battle with the Devil is won by the missionaries' willingness to share in the self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ on the Cross, is a theme that I shall explore further in chapter three of this study. The introduction to the letters concludes by suggesting that 'the light of St Francis Xavier shines in his letters like a sun at its full light', and that his heart was at 'the tip of his tongue and his pen' when he wrote them.¹⁸⁰ This is a testament to his letters as faith-filled texts that speak from his heart to the heart of the reader, a style of writing that we have already suggested is typical of the *Relations*, in which the authors not only attempt to inform their readership but also to produce narratives that move them and stir piety in their hearts with an 'alphabet of flame'.

The interest of the French Jesuits in the missions to Asia did not end with Xavier's death on the borders of China. They were regularly exposed to reports from other areas such as Japan, often translated into French and either read to them during meals in the refectory, or made available for reading in their college libraries.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, various French Jesuits in the early seventeenth century produced or translated histories of Japan that incorporated these letters.¹⁸² Of greatest importance were the various accounts of Jesuits, other religious, secular clergy and lay Christians

¹⁸⁰ The original text reads: '[...] la Sainteté de S. Xavier paroist en ses lettres comme un Soeil en ses propres rayons', and '[...] devoir, pour ainsi dire, son coeur au bout sa langue et de sa plume', in Solier, *Lettres du B. Pere Saint Francois Xavier*, introduction.

¹⁸¹ As Takeo Abé points out, the accounts from Japan, compiled from 1579 onwards as *Carta annua de Japão*, were disseminated to Jesuit provinces throughout Europe and the Americas, translated into local languages, and read regularly (p. 5). Between 1552 and 1651, forty accounts of the missions to Japan were made available in French, while another sixty-four were available to the French Jesuits in Latin (p. 129); Italian texts circulated Europe (pp. 5–7). See Abé, *The Jesuit Mission to New France*. For an example of an early modern French account, see François Pasio, *Lettres annales du Japon. Nouvellement traduites d'Italien en François, par les Pères de la mesme Compagnie* (Lyon, 1609).

¹⁸² François Solier, *Dicours des choses remarquables advenues au royaume du Japon depuis la mort du roy Taicosama, X Octobre de l'an 1599 et 25 Febvrier de l'an 1601* (Arras, 1604); Corneille Wyfliet, *Histoire universelle des indes orientales* (Douay, 1607); Nicholas Trigaut, *Histoire des Martyrs du Japon depuis l'an MDCXII jusques a MDCXX*, trans. Pierre Morin (Paris, 1624); François Solier, *Histoire ecclesiastique des Iles et royaume du Japon* (Paris, 1627); and *Histoire de ce qui s'est passé au royaume du Japon, es années 1625, 1626 et 1627*. Traduite d'Italien en François par un Père de la mesme Compagnie (Paris, 1633).

in Japan, who were martyred *en masse*.¹⁸³ These public executions of missionaries and Japanese Christians began in 1597 with the crucifixions at the port of Nagasaki, and continued sporadically, eventually leading to the official banning of Christianity by the reigning shogun Tokugawa in 1614, the expulsion of the missionaries, and the state's decision to eliminate Japanese Christians.¹⁸⁴ This policy led to an organized, thorough and brutal attempt to annihilate all who chose to remain Christian — including any Jesuits who had clandestinely stayed in Japan despite their banishment. There is no question that the authors of the *Relations* were both exposed to, and influenced by, accounts such as these. In fact, in 1639, Lalemant confessed that, given the recent examples of martyrdom around the globe, 'it would be a sort of curse if this quarter of the world should not participate in the happiness of having contributed to the splendour of this glory'.¹⁸⁵ Here, reflecting upon the Jesuits killed in England and Africa, as well as Japan, and in the interior of South America, the author concludes that suffering and death for Christ, and for those whom they have gone to serve in the missions, has been an essential characteristic of other Jesuit missions around the world, and no doubt will be the same in *Nouvelle-France* as well.

A final possible connection between Xavier, the mission literature of Japan, and the *Relations*, is not explicit but nonetheless fascinating. In the necrology of Brébeuf, the superior at Sainte-Marie attempts to illustrate the interior life of his recently murdered comrade:

¹⁸³ Recit véritable de la glorieuse mort de vingt et six Chrestiens mis en croix. Par commandement du roy du Jappon, le 5. de Fevrier 1597. Envoyé par le Père Louys Frois, le 15 de Mars au R. Père Claude Aquaviva, trans. Jean de Bordes Bordelois (Paris, 1604); La glorieuse mort de neuf Chrestiens Japponois, martyrisez pour la foy catholique aux royaumes de Fingo, Sassoma, et Firando. Envoyée du Jappon l'an 1609 and 1610 au mois de mars par le R. P. Provincial de la Société de Jésus (Douay, 1612); and Lettres annuelle du Jappon de l'an six cens treize. Contenant plusieurs exemples de rare vertu, et divers actes des Martyrs, qui y ont souffert pour la confession de la fois Chrestienne Durant la mesme anée. Escripte par le Père Sébastien Viera de la Compagnie de Iesu, trans. François Solier (Paris, 1618).

¹⁸⁴ Ikuo Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice* (Leiden; Boston, 2001), p. 139.

¹⁸⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638-1639), pp. 27–28.

In the year 1640 [...] a great Cross appeared to him, which came from the direction of the Iroquois Nations. He mentioned it to the Father who accompanied him; the latter asking him for some further details of this apparition, he answered him only that this cross was so great that it was adequate to hold not only one person, but all of us who were in these countries.¹⁸⁶

The content of this vision is a prime example of Brébeuf's religious worldview, a view that we find in all the authors. Recognizing the threat that the Iroquois represented to the evangelical project among the Amerindian peoples, Brébeuf understood them to be the future source of his greatest suffering for Christ but, at the same time, he understood that suffering to be a divine invitation available to all. Mission and suffering, the Cross of Christ, and the invitation for all to take it up, intermingled in the mind of the author.

The potential influences that shaped Brébeuf's particular experience here are numerous, and do not exclude the possibility of a genuine encounter with God. Nevertheless, considering the exposure that Brébeuf had to the epistolary literature and published histories of other missions, it should be noted that a miraculous vision of the Cross is a part of Xavier's narrative and that of various Jesuits who write about the Christian community in Japan. In one of his letters, Xavier chronicles the death of a young prince from the island of Ceilan (Sri Lanka), whose father had him murdered by an assassin for asking the Jesuit to baptize him. As the prince's body fell dead to the ground, the missionary claims to have seen 'une grande Croix de feu' that filled the sky above him, and writes that the very ground around the body tore open, to reveal, 'la figure d'une autre croix miraculeuse'.¹⁸⁷ The cross of fire in the sky and the cross growing out of the earth are linked in the letter to the young catechumen's sacrifice for the faith, as external and mystical manifestations of his inner encounter with God.

¹⁸⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 61.

¹⁸⁷ Solier, *Lettre du B. Pere Saint François Xavier*, p. 140.

Similarly, in the *Histoire des martyrs du Japon* by Nicholas Trigaut (1577–1628), the miraculous appearances in 1590 of three crosses, two in the village of Obama and the third in the village of Arima, both north of Kyoto, function as a connecting ‘red thread’ running through the work. These perfectly shaped crosses, which are said to have formed within the bark of trees, became places of pilgrimage, credited with various miracles, and were soon understood to be divine warnings of the impending persecution that Christians would face throughout Japan.¹⁸⁸ Trigaut places so much importance on these crosses that beautiful images of them are incorporated into the iconography of his work’s title page. Thus Xavier’s fiery cross in the sky, the crosses that literally grow out of ancient trees in Japan, and Brébeuf’s cross above the lands of the Iroquois, form together a consistent attestation that the Christianity in these places is rooted in a faith that involves suffering. It is not certain to what extent Brébeuf was influenced by these earlier texts. Nonetheless, his mention of Xavier and Japan suggests that the heroic efforts and great sacrifices made there were indeed a part of his religious consciousness in *Nouvelle-France*.

In addition to Xavier and the evangelical labours in Japan, on two occasions, Le Jeune also refers to the Jesuit missions of the ‘Américains méridionaux’, while both he and Le Mercier make particular references to the efforts of their confrères in Paraguay. In his 1634 *Relation*, Le Jeune proposes that the Devil may not be physically present among the Amerindians of *Nouvelle-France* as he is among those of southern America, whom Satan ‘beats and torments’ unceasingly.¹⁸⁹ And in 1637, he concludes that, if the indigenous peoples to the south, ripe with ‘vices’ and strange ‘superstitions’, can so successfully embrace the Christian faith, then those he ministers to, ‘far removed from all luxury’, ‘not given to many offences’ and

¹⁸⁸ Trigaut, *Histoire des Martyrs du Japon*, p. 25.

¹⁸⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 78–79.

seemingly unattached ‘to the worship of any particular divinity’, should one day all the more flourish in the faith.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, in his response to a letter asking how the Jesuits plan to evangelize the Amerindian peoples, he replies that, ‘if he who wrote this letter has read the relation of what is occurring in *Paraquais* [Paraguay], he has seen that which shall some day be accomplished in New France’.¹⁹¹ This statement is confirmed by Le Mercier who, in his *Relation* of 1637–38, admits that one of the best ways to convince Amerindians that their interpretation of dreams, their ritual dances and their feasts are rooted in the machinations of demonic forces, is to tell them how all the Jesuit missionaries condemn these practices from experience, having read of ‘many idolaters and infidels’ in Paraguay, who have ‘finally opened their eyes to the truth of the Gospel’.¹⁹²

These references to South America, and particularly to Paraguay, reveal four important spaces of intertextual encounter. First, in Le Jeune’s response to the inquiry about the Jesuits’ missionary strategy, we see him mention directly ‘relations’ of the mission to Paraguay, suggesting both that he had read at least one of them, and that they were indeed available to his French readership. Second, by stating that to read the relations from Paraguay is to understand what the Jesuits hoped to accomplish in *Nouvelle-France*, Le Jeune suggests that the content of these texts was understood by the authors of the *Relations* to be a model for their own work. Third, we see that Le Jeune, and probably his colleagues in the mission, understood that these two different groups of Amerindians are, in some ways, comparable. In saying this the author implies that he and his fellow missionaries have studied enough about the inhabitants of South America to make the comparison, and that this study influenced both their

¹⁹⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 27–28.

¹⁹¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 305.

¹⁹² Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 60.

observations of the Amerindian peoples and their attempts to articulate these observations in the *Relations*.

Other than the accounts from Paraguay, the authors do not make any specific reference in the *Relations* to books they might have consulted about the Americas. Yet, as we shall see later in this study, their articulation of the Amerindians' human identity and description of Amerindian society, spiritual beliefs and rituals, as well as their understanding of the role of the demonic in the New World, can be paralleled in the observations made by the Spanish Jesuit and missionary José de Acosta (1539–1600).¹⁹³ Between 1572 and 1586, Acosta laboured in the Spanish Kingdom of Peru first as a professor of moral theology at the Jesuit college in Lima, then as a visitor, or inspector, of colleges, and then as provincial superior. After his return to Spain in 1587, he wrote two important works, *De procuranda indorum salute* (1588) and *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590), which were soon translated into multiple languages and spread across Europe.¹⁹⁴

In his *Natural and Moral History*, Acosta elaborates on the presence of the Devil and his demons in the West Indies, suggesting that Satan had moved much of his focus towards the barbarians of the world after Christianity had taken hold on the Roman Empire. Acosta argues that in the absence of the knowledge of and belief in God, Satan effectively rules over the barbarians by controlling them covertly through their pagan rituals and by ensuring that they worship material objects as divinities so

¹⁹³ For an excellent examination of the life and work of José de Acosta see Claudio M. Burgaleta, *José de Acosta (1540–1600): His Life and Thought* (Chicago, 1999).

¹⁹⁴ *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) was translated into French by the Jesuit humanist Robert Regnault Cauxois and published by Marc Orry in Paris in 1598. Cf. Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 12 vols (Bruxelles; Paris, 1960), I, p. 36. *De procuranda indorum salute* (1570) is listed in the Jesuit Archives, Paris, as a part of religious order's pre-suppression collection. In his *Historia Canadensis* (1666), the first written history of the Jesuit mission to New France, François du Creux suggests that both of these texts should be read to understand Jesuit missionary strategies in the region. As indicated in the Bibliographical Abbreviations, this study utilises the English translation of the text: *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. by Jane E. Mangan, trans. by Walter D. Mignolo (London, 2002.).

as to keep their eyes fixed on the material world.¹⁹⁵ As we shall see in chapter three, there are striking parallels between these conclusions and those of Le Jeune, Brébeuf, Le Mercier and Jérôme Lalemant. In fact, the authors of the *Relations* attach so much importance to this point that Satan becomes a major protagonist in their narratives; he inflicts suffering on the Jesuits in *Nouvelle-France* and is ultimately involved in their martyrdoms.

In *De procuranda indorum salute*, Acosta was the first to outline a tri-partite hierarchy of the barbarians in the Indies, which is to say in both Asia and the Americas, where, applying Aristotelian ideas of civilization, he suggests that while all are human persons, they are at different stages of socio-political, rhetorical, linguistic and religious development.¹⁹⁶ In the lowest category, he places the ‘*salvajes*’ (savages), who are described as nomadic or forest dwellers, with no real legal system or consistent religious practices and no written languages; they are often naked and crude, and are sometimes cannibals.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Acosta argues that each category above that represents progress, and that the ‘barbarian’ can step from one to the other, eventually becoming more and more ‘civilized’.¹⁹⁸ As we shall see in chapter four, the authors of the *Relations* not only identify Amerindians as ‘*sauvages*’ and ‘*barbares*’, but also use these terms rhetorically to denote a similar movement either towards or away from greater human development. For the authors, the particular aspect of the Christian life that will move these peoples up the ladder of human development is the sacrifice of abnegation and self-offering to God modelled on the life of Jesus Christ. When the Amerindians are described as failing to advance, or indeed rejecting

¹⁹⁵Natural and Moral History, pp. 253–55, 300–04.

¹⁹⁶ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute*, XXIII, 62–63, 62–65, 66–69.

¹⁹⁷ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute*, XXIII, 66–69. Cf. Girolamo Imbruglia, ‘The Invention of Savage Society: Amerindian Religion and Society in Acosta’s Anthropological Theology’, *History of European Ideas*, 40.3 (2014).

¹⁹⁸ See: Chapter Four of this thesis, pp. 197-8.

Christianity outright, turning in upon themselves and their creaturely desires, the authors willingly bear the brunt of that rejection and ultimately respond by offering themselves all the more to God for the sake of the mission. Again, the dichotomy between self-centredness and self-sacrifice for God lies at the centre of the rhetoric of martyrdom throughout the narratives.

8. Conclusion

The *Relations* are thus a complex set of narratives influenced by a variety of texts that both inform and enhance their rhetoric of martyrdom. For our purposes, the *Exercises* is the principal text creating the intellectual and metaphysical context for this rhetoric. Its invitation to an interior life freely detached from anything in the world that would distract from discerning, and then living out, God's will is reflected in the way the authors privilege a life of self-abnegation and sacrifice to reach this goal. Their model is Christ crucified, who willingly accepted his heavenly Father's request to redeem the world through calumny, torture, suffering and death. Only in choosing to live and die as Christ did do the authors see hope for themselves and the Amerindian peoples. The Amerindians, through their social and spiritual practices, are thought to have been caught up in the struggles of the First Week of the *Exercises*, a life of creaturely desire, materiality and self-centredness, of 'inordinate attachment', that keeps them from recognizing the true God. As in the *Exercises*, the authors see Satan as their principal opponent in this divine calling — 'the enemy of human nature' and would-be ruler of the New World, who labours hard against any effort of God or his agents to promote the only way in which the Amerindians might grow in their human identity.

Having elected in their Tertianship to enter *Nouvelle-France* as part of a 'second conversion', the authors, following the example of Louis Lallemant, elevate

their experiences of the *Exercises* into a cosmic battle for their own souls and those of the Amerindian peoples. The perceived spirit of selfishness among the Amerindians is amplified in the authors' minds as they remember the importance of 'critiquing actions' and 'guarding the heart' from impurity typical of the Lallemand 'school'. Again, their response is abnegation, penance, sacrifices and 'annihilation', in an effort to be closer to the crucified Christ. For as Louis Lallemand had suggested, just as Christ redeemed the world through suffering, the evangelical labourer can pass on this truth only by taking up his own Cross and by embracing contradictions, calumnies, injuries and sufferings.

This idea also resonated with the authors' exposure to Sacred Scripture. Throughout the *Relations*, Scripture is used to validate their belief that only by joining themselves to Christ can the Amerindians be truly free to discover who they are, though this process inevitably involves suffering. The ideas of Kempis, whose influential work is referenced in the *Relations*, further corroborates the authors' belief that the suffering of both the missionaries and the Amerindian Christians is bound up in the suffering Christ. They understand his Cross to be the source of protection from their enemies, of virtue, joy, true peace and redemption. The same is true of the mission literature of their time. The authors highlight Francis Xavier as a model of self-sacrificing heroism, and the Christians of Japan who chose to suffer for the sake of their faith. Following Acosta, they present Amerindians as human persons who lack the knowledge of Christ but who, with that knowledge, could rise up to a greater awareness of their fullest human potential by offering themselves to God.

The *Exercises*, the 'School of Louis Lallemand', Sacred Scripture, the *Imitatio* and mission literature, come together in the *Relations* in two basic premises articulated by Loyola himself: if we wish to be like Christ, we must choose 'poverty,

insult and be counted as fools for Christ'; and if we chose to stand before Christ crucified, we must lovingly ask 'what I ought to do and suffer with him' who has done so much for me.¹⁹⁹ As I shall illustrate, to make this choice, the authors embarked on an inner journey to purge from within themselves any attachment to material objects, worldly reward, places or persons, a journey that brought them to *Nouvelle-France* at the service of Amerindian peoples. The authors' personal emphasis on union with Christ through detachment, abnegation and annihilation, shaped their perspectives on both why these people needed evangelization and how it should be done. It also often brought them to the conclusion that in fully offering their lives to God, even to the point of death, their evangelical labours would find a perfect completion that would bring enormous spiritual benefit to the Amerindians whom they evangelized. It is these ideas, informed by the various texts that we have examined in this chapter, that form the context for the rhetoric of martyrdom in the narratives; they are part of the story behind the story found in the *Relations*.

¹⁹⁹ *SE* [165–7].

CHAPTER TWO

‘Le pays de la croix’: The ‘Divine’, the ‘Missionary’, and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom in the *Relations*

1. Introduction

In 1634, Le Jeune described *Nouvelle-France* as ‘le pays de la croix’, the ‘country of the cross’, a land filled with discomforts, inconveniences, strange customs, toil, danger and the constant threat of death.¹ Yet, he also claimed that the missionaries inhabited it with joy.² In fact, the more dangerous the terrain they faced, the more ‘consolation’ they are said to have felt,³ while the constant threat of death was to bring a ‘very great happiness’.⁴ Discomfort and joy, danger and consolation, death and happiness are thus brought together in the pages of their narratives.

As we shall see, the association of these ideas in the *Relations* was by no means paradoxical, but instead represents a mystery central to the religious worldview held by the authors — that God, in Jesus Christ, had lovingly offered his whole life on the Cross to save the world from sin, and that if anyone chooses to follow him, they must willingly share that same mission. Indeed, Vimont, Le Mercier and Jérôme Lalemant all indicate that it is by sharing in the Cross of Christ that their evangelical labours will bear fruit,⁵ while Brébeuf envisions an enormous Cross covering the lands, concluding that it was large enough for all to rest upon it.⁶ The Cross of Jesus Christ and its meaning as the sign of self-offering love are therefore superimposed by the authors upon *Nouvelle-France*. It is located as the literary landscape, stage, and

¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 331.

² Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 97–98; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 298; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 305.

³ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 12.

⁴ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 149.

⁵ Cf. Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), pp. 28–30; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 131–32; and Vimont, *Nouvelle-France - Hurons* (1642–1643), pp. 161, 177–78.

⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 60–61.

the mystical space where God and the Jesuit, the ‘divine’ and the ‘missionary’, lovingly offer themselves for the salvation of the Amerindian peoples.

As we shall see in this chapter, it is this essential view of the authors that forms the rhetoric of martyrdom found in the pages of the *Relations*. There, the suffering of the missionary is united to his mission as both an on-going sign of his union with Christ and the circumstance from which God will bring about the conversion of the Amerindian peoples. Throughout the narratives, the authors proposed that any trial they faced, no matter how severe, was in fact a privileged opportunity of self-abnegation that united them with the suffering Christ and advanced their mission. Discomforts, misfortunes, natural disasters, illness, calumny, some instances of torture and even the threat of death were connected to God’s providence, and understood to be gifts from an affectionate divinity who provides opportunities to build up the Christian faith. The offering of liturgical celebrations, the taking of personal vows to God, self-imposed penances and acts of self-mortification were all said to bring about divine intervention. The possibility of God inviting the missionary to suffer torture and death is described as a divine gift, an opportunity for the total offering of self to God for the sake of his divinely instituted mission, which will set the foundation for the Church in *Nouvelle-France*.

In the first part of this chapter, analysis of this rhetoric will begin with a study of the various ideas and influences within the Christian tradition that informed it. Since the authors’ idea of the suffering Christ lies at its centre, I shall first examine how the earliest Christians described Christ’s total offering of himself on the Cross in the New Testament, and how this is presented as the disposition of anyone who chooses to follow him. I shall then show how the early Christian martyrs of the Roman Empire appropriated this view and died counting themselves blessed for

having shared in the lot of Christ. They believed that their suffering for Christ created a mystical space that drew them closer to him, inspired their preaching, brought about healings and helped to build up faith in others, all of which reflects an understanding of martyrdom that will later be identified in the *Relations*.

In section three, we will see how this idea of self-sacrificing love for God was intentionally re-appropriated in a post-persecution Church so that the martyrs' radical self-offering to God became a largely internal disposition for every Christian life. In section four, we shall see how, during the Reformation, Christians again found it necessary to die for their faith *en masse* and how, to make sense of this new theatre of violence, they turned to the traditions of the early Church, and often died believing that their choosing to suffer for and with Christ was the only way to be true to who they were. In section five, I shall move to the particular socio-religious context of early modern France where, amidst escalating religious violence between Roman Catholics and Huguenots, the spirituality of François de Sales (1578–1635), Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629), Jean-Jacques Olier (1608–1657) and Jean Eudes (1601–1680) contributed to the shaping of the religious context in which the authors of the *Relations* understood self-offering to God. In section six, I shall examine the *Exercises* of Loyola, looking for the author's particular expression of spiritual union with Christ and self-offering love. Finally, in section seven we will see how this theme was understood and articulated by Louis Lallemant in a tradition from which the authors of the *Relations* arose.

In the second part of this chapter, I shall turn to the *Relations* themselves. There we shall see, in section eight, how the authors articulated their role within the 'land of the cross' and in section nine, how they understood suffering for and with God as a form of self-'annihilation' that united them all the more in love with Jesus

Christ. In section ten, we shall see that they understood their suffering to be an opportunity for their own greater sanctification and that of their Amerindian companions. Section eleven shows how the slander, persecution and threat of death inflicted upon them, as well as their chosen sacrifices in the form of personal and communal vows, piety, mortifications and various other ascetical practices, are described as a source of great spiritual and temporal benefit to their mission.

In section twelve, I will examine the authors' belief that this disposition of self-sacrificing love for and with Christ finds its ultimate expression in martyrdom. Martyrdom could purge from the sufferer the effect of past sins, bring about profound mystical union with God and sow seeds of blood that God would nurture for the growth of the Church in *Nouvelle-France*. We shall see that it was in this state, having accepted suffering and death for God, that the authors believed they were truly and fully members of the Jesuit order, living out as best they could the purpose of their mission to the 'land of the cross'. I shall end in section thirteen with some conclusions that reiterate the central theme of self-sacrificing love both for and with God in the missionaries' religious worldview, and in the rhetoric of martyrdom throughout the narrative.

2. Self-Sacrificing Love for and with God in the Early Christian Church

The idea of suffering for God in the Christian imagination begins with the attempt of its earliest communities to explain the life and death of its founder, Jesus of Nazareth. They proclaimed Jesus as the 'Son of God' who had been 'sent' by his 'Father' as part of a divine mission to free the world from 'sin and death'.⁷ They explained his suffering in the light of what they understood to be God's eternal plan in human

⁷ Cf. 'Son of God': Matthew 16:16, Mark 5:7, Mark 14:61, Luke 1:32, Luke 1:35, John 1:14, John 5:27, 2 John 1:3; 'sent' by God the 'Father': John 3:16, John 5:36–37, John 5:43, John 6: 44, and John 14:31.

history, suggesting that this was the means that the divine will had chosen for the restoration of the world from sin.⁸

This supreme act of self-sacrificing love was, however, not restricted to Jesus Christ, but was also understood to be an inherent part of the Christian life. Jesus, described as the ‘Word’ of God, ‘through whom all things are made’, ‘the man’ (John 19:5), and the fullest ‘example’ of human life (1 Corinthians 11:1), was understood to be the model for every person.⁹ The life of Jesus, in both word and action, was thus considered to be the template for the life of anyone who chooses to believe in him.¹⁰ His proclamation that ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ (John 15:13), was to become grafted on to the Christian identity. No doubt with this in mind, the apostle Peter (d. AD 64) saw the self-sacrifice and suffering of Jesus as an example so that all ‘should follow in his steps’ (1 Peter 2:21–25), while Paul argued that followers of Jesus Christ should be motivated by love of God, humble and ‘self-emptying’, striving to hold ‘the same mind as Christ’, who humbled himself in becoming ‘human’, and who even suffered ‘death on the cross’ (Philippians 2:1–8).¹¹

Indeed Jesus warned his disciples that part of their office would necessarily involve persecution, suffering and even death, telling them that ‘if they persecuted me, they will persecute you’, and that his message would bring ‘a sword’ that would divide society (Matthew 10:34–6).¹² He stipulated that ‘If anyone wants to become

⁸ Cf. Matthew 17:12, Mark 8:31–33, Mark 8:31, Mark 9:12, Mark 10:33–34, Luke 9:22, Luke 17:25, Luke 24:26, Acts 2:23–24, Acts 3:13–14, Acts 3:18, Acts 4:10–12, 1 John 2:2.

⁹ Cf. Hebrews 12:2, Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:6, Revelation 1:8, 22:13, Revelation 1:5, 3:4.

¹⁰ Cf. Matthew 11:27, John 14:16, John 18:37, John 8:32–36, Ephesians 2:18, Ephesians 3:17–19 and Ephesians 4:20–24.

¹¹ It has been suggested that Paul’s years of house arrest and subsequent trial not only shaped his own views on persecution and suffering but also gave his letters a *gravitas* within the Christian communities. Cf. Richard J. Cassidy, *Paul in Chains: Roman Imprisonment and the Letters of St Paul* (New York, 2001).

¹² Cf. Matthew 5:12, Matthew 10: 17–8, Matthew 10:24, John 15:18–21, John 21:18, Acts 9:16, 1 Corinthians 4:9.

my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me [...] for those who lose their life for me will save it' (Mark 8:34–6) and, more dramatically, 'Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:27). Finally, he proclaimed that in suffering with him, Christians would build up faith, for 'unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (Matthew 10:37–9).

This emphasis within early Christianity soon took concrete form, as religious leaders in Jerusalem responded to the new sect with disdain, corporal punishment and execution. Professing his faith in Christ before the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, the deacon Stephen (d. AD 34) was overwhelmed by a mob of angry men and stoned to death for uttering 'blasphemy' (Acts 7:1–50). Near death, Stephen cried out two prayers, first: 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit' and, second, 'Lord do not hold this sin against them' (Acts 7:59–60). The inclusion of these two prayers in Acts, which were also said to be the prayers of Jesus while dying on his Cross illustrates, in practice, the developing Christian idea that to die for Jesus is in a way to die with Jesus, and that the one who suffers and dies for God takes on Jesus' identity for those who witness it.

With the proclamation of the Emperor Nero (AD 37–68) in 64 that Christians were responsible for a devastating fire in Rome, this religious minority began to be blamed for every ill that plagued Roman society.¹³ A century later, the Christian apologist Tertullian (160–220) wrote that 'They [Romans] think the Christians the cause of every public disaster, of every affliction [...] straight away the cry is "Away with the Christians to the lions"'.¹⁴ Though the official persecution of Christians by the Roman authorities has more recently been considered 'sporadic', nonetheless under the reigns of Nero, Decius (249–51), Valerian (253–9) and Diocletian (284–

¹³ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, trans. by Donald Reynolds Dudley (New York, 1966), book XV, para. 44.

¹⁴ Tertullian, *The Apology of Tertullian*, trans. by W. M. Reeve (London, 1709), pp. 114–15.

285), it is still considered to have been ‘acute’.¹⁵ Christians were declared ‘atheists’ for not believing in the plethora of gods found in the Roman religion.¹⁶ They were also often accused of ‘incest’ and ‘cannibalism’.¹⁷ Most importantly, however, by refusing to offer sacrifices to any god for the emperor and the benefit of home, city or empire, Christians were considered to be disrespectful of their families, ‘subversive’, ‘social dissidents’, treasonous and the cause of divine retribution.¹⁸ In times of acute persecution, Christians around the empire were imprisoned, put on trial by local magistrates, ordered to repent, sometimes tortured and often executed by the gruesome means reserved for convicted criminals.

Living under persecution or a constant threat of future persecution and being exposed to ongoing aversion did not leave the early Christian communities unaffected.¹⁹ Many adherents, unwilling to recant their religious beliefs, willingly chose the alternatives: social exclusion, torture and death. In doing so, they both furthered their belief that to die for Jesus Christ was a blessing, and established for themselves a unique identity *vis-à-vis* the world of their Roman oppressors.²⁰ This response, in some cases chronicled by prisoners though more often by witnesses,

¹⁵ Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York, 2004), pp. 37–38; Morwenna Ludlow, *The Early Church* (London, 2009), p. 25.

¹⁶ Ludlow, *The Early Church*, p. 27.

¹⁷ Cf. Robert Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, 1984).

¹⁸ Cf. Stanelly K. Stowers, ‘Greeks Who Sacrifice and Those Who Do Not: Towards an Anthropology of the Greek Religion’, in *A History of the Later Roman Empire, AD 284–641*, ed. by Stephen Mitchell (Oxford, 2009), p. 229; *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, ed. by Michael White *et al.* (Minneapolis, 1995), p. 294; O. F. Robinson, ‘The Repression of Christians in the Pre-Decian Period: A Legal Problem Still’, *Irish Jurist*, 25 (1990), 269–92; *Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman Views, Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World*, ed. by Molly Whittaker (New York, 1984), pp. 133–94.

¹⁹ Cf. *Church and State in the Early Church*, ed. by Arthur J. Droge *et al.* (New York, 1993); Pierre Maraval, ‘Les persecutions des chrétiens durant les quatres premiers siècles’, *Bibliothèque d’Histoire du Christianisme*, 30 (1993), 20–36; Arthur J. Droge and J. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco, 1992); Herbert B. Workman, *Persecution in the Early Church* (New York, 1980); William Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford, 1965).

²⁰ Cf. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, p. 35; J. Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representations in the Early Christian Era* (London, 1994), p. 12; Johan Leemans, *More Than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom in the History of Christianity*, ed. by John Leemans (Leuven, 2005), p. xv.

created a corpus of literature that inspired perseverance in future generations.²¹ The records articulate a response to the reality of early Christian life that identified suffering and self-sacrificing death out of love for God as a constituent part of the Christian tradition.²²

Within these texts, one can gather three principal elements that shall later be reflected in the rhetoric of martyrdom found in the *Relations*. First, many of the martyrs present a belief that their personal union with Jesus Christ would be intensified through their act of suffering with him.²³ Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (c. 35–c. 107), for example, wrote to his community from Rome urging that they should not interfere with his execution, so that by means of the wild animals, he could ‘attain God’, ‘be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ’ and ultimately become his divine ‘instrument’.²⁴ The bishop proposed that if he offered himself up to be devoured, he would at the same time be filled with Christ.²⁵ In suffering ‘fire and cross and packs of wild beasts, mutilations, tearing apart, scatterings of bones, mangled limbs, crushing of the whole body’, Ignatius believed that he would ‘attain Jesus Christ’.²⁶ Similarly, in the accounts of Perpetua and of the Christians of Lyon, the willingness to die with Christ is likened to a ‘trial by fire’, a kind of second baptism that will deepen their union with God.²⁷ When, in the account of the *Martyrs of Lyon*, a bishop named Potheinos is brought to trial, it is suggested that the crowds mocked him, ‘as if

²¹ For a sense of the breadth of early Christian martyrdom literature, see Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972). The accounts examined in the present study include: *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* (pp. 2–21); *The Acts of Justin and his Companions* (pp. 42–61); *The Martyrs of Lyon* (pp. 62–85); *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (pp. 106–31); *The Martyrdom of Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Sirmium* (pp. 294–301), and *The Martyrdom of St Crispina* (pp. 302–09).

²² Cf. Lacy Baldwin Smith, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World* (New York, 1997).

²³ *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, pp. 6–8; Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*, trans. by Robert M. Grant (London; Toronto, 1967), p. 4.

²⁴ Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans* (book IV, no. 1–2).

²⁵ Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans* (book VI, no. 2).

²⁶ Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans* (book V, no. 3).

²⁷ *The Passion of Perpetua*, 4:7, 4:14; *The Martyrs of Lyon*, 1:6, 1:18, 1:58.

he were Christ'.²⁸ Similarly, during the torture of a young woman named Blendina, hung on a pike crosswise, the authors suggest that the crowd 'beheld with their outward eyes in the form of their sister Him who was crucified for them',²⁹ so that 'all who suffer for the glory of Christ have unbroken fellowship with the living God'.³⁰ And after her baptism in prison, the young Christian aristocrat Perpetua (d. 203) claimed to have the ability to 'speak familiarly with the Lord [Jesus], whose great blessings I had come to experience.'³¹ In her journal, she expressed a strong desire to be united with God, and proceeded to divest herself of her pagan father, her child, her status as a Roman aristocrat and even her very gender; as in one of her mystical visions she becomes a powerful man fighting for the honour of God against the Devil.³² In accomplishing all this, she is considered wedded to Christ.³³ In each of these examples, the Christians who detached themselves from their social status or wealth and then suffered abnegation, torture and death, for love of God are presented as having become mystically united to the person of Jesus Christ.

Second, several accounts suggest that this self-sacrifice for God redefines the martyr's physical location, whether in a cage on the road, a prison or an arena, making it a sacred space, often filled with elated joy. The juridical process of interrogation, persuasion and torture, along with the threat of grotesque forms of public execution, was believed by the Roman magistrates to be an effective deterrent to criminality. Yet Christians often baffled their judges by embracing this experience.³⁴ On the way to trial, for example, Ignatius of Antioch writes that 'If I suffer, I will become a freed man of Jesus Christ, and I will rise in him free. Now, I

²⁸ *Martyrs of Lyon*, 1:30.

²⁹ *Martyrs of Lyon*, 2:3.

³⁰ *Martyrs of Lyon*, 2:3, 1:1, 1:41.

³¹ *Perpetua's Passion*, 4:2.

³² *Perpetua's Passion*, 6:2.

³³ *Perpetua's Passion*, 3:2, 5:6, 3:9, 6:2, 10:7, 20:7, 20:9.

³⁴ Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, p. 48.

am learning, in bondage, to desire nothing'.³⁵ His imprisonment and condemnation by the Roman establishment became for him a place of detachment and even spiritual freedom, since it came about because of his love for Jesus Christ. The author of the *Martyrs of Lyon* describes the torture and death of the Christians as 'a gift from God for those deemed worthy to receive it',³⁶ while Perpetua described her prison as a joy-filled 'palace' of Christian community.³⁷ According to Elizabeth A. Castelli, contemporaries no longer considered convicted criminals as members of human society when they stepped into the arena, but as bodies to be marked publicly by the example of Roman justice.³⁸ Christians such as the apologist Marcus Minucius Felix nonetheless described the event in an entirely different way:

How beautiful is the spectacle to God when a Christian does battle with pain; when [he] is drawn up against threats, and punishments, and tortures; when mocking the noise of death, [he] treads under foot the horror of the executioner; when [he] raises up his liberty against kings and princes ... when triumphant and victorious [he] tramples upon the very man who has pronounced sentence against him.³⁹

It is in this same spirit that Perpetua is said to have entered into the arena, naked and ready to face her execution, staring down the spectators as the glorified bride of Christ and helping an inexperienced young gladiator to run his sword through her body.⁴⁰ When Christians entered these spaces of suffering and death for Christ, they believed that their locations were transformed into sacred spaces of encounter with God.

Thirdly, several accounts suggest that the act of uniting oneself with Jesus by sharing his suffering and death makes the Christian a participant in the healing of the world from sin. Again, Ignatius of Antioch presents himself as 'God's wheat' that,

³⁵ Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans* (book IV, no. 3).

³⁶ *Martyrs of Lyon*, 1:13, 2:7, 2:3.

³⁷ Perpetua's Passion, 3.9.

³⁸ Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, pp. 39, 108.

³⁹ Marcus Minucius Felix, *The Octavius*, trans. Rudolph Abbesmann, Emily Joseph Daly, and Edwin A. Quain (Washington, 1950), p. 397.

⁴⁰ Perpetua's Passion, 20:7, 20:9.

‘ground by the teeth of wild beasts’, will become the ‘pure bread of Christ’.⁴¹ In making a selfless sacrifice to God, Ignatius believes that he will become ‘pure bread of Christ’, or Eucharistic bread, meant to be consumed by others so that Jesus might dwell in them. Tertullian proclaims that ‘The Christian blood you spill is like the seed you sow, it springs from the earth again, and fructifies the more’,⁴² and Perpetua describes generative powers in the form of visions and divine intercession which come to her after she has chosen to sacrifice her life out of love for Jesus Christ.⁴³ In both the account of Perpetua and the *Martyrs of Lyon*, the authors suggest that the disposition and action of the martyrs brought about the conversion of many bystanders.⁴⁴ The early Christian theologian Origen (c. 184–c. 253) explains these phenomena in this way:

For just as those who served the altar according to the Law of Moses thought they were ministering forgiveness of sins to the people by the blood of goats and bulls [...] so also the souls of those who have been beheaded for their witness to Jesus do not serve the heavenly altar in vain and minister forgiveness of sins to those who pray.⁴⁵

He proposes that to die for Christ is to join in Christ’s action of dying on the Cross for the forgiveness of all human sin. As such, the decision to die out of love for Jesus Christ is conceived to be a way in which Christians conjoin themselves with his sacrifice and, through this mystical union, help to heal those around them and perhaps every human person.

After the Emperor Constantine’s official release of all Christians from persecution in 313 and then, in 380, the joint proclamation of Gratian and Theodosius that Christianity would be the official religion of both the Eastern and the Western Empires, the formal execution of Christians for their faith ceased. Yet its continuing

⁴¹ Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans*, book IV, no. 1. See also book VI, no. 2.

⁴² Tertullian, *The Apology of Tertullian*, p. 143.

⁴³ *Perpetua’s Passion*, 5:5, 7:2–3, 8:5.

⁴⁴ *Perpetua’s Passion*, 17:3; *The Martyrs of Lyon*, 1: 45–6.

⁴⁵ Origen: *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, ed. by Rowan A. Greer (New York, 1979), p. 62.

presence in the Christian imagination remained a motivating force.⁴⁶ Indeed, during Constantine's own reign, the bishop and church historian Eusebius (260–339) wrote that the witness of the martyrs could serve as 'models for the later church' — a Church free of persecution.⁴⁷ The struggle to live a life of loving self-offering to God, in the spirit of the martyrs, was soon reimagined.

Some men and women moved into the desert on a spiritual quest shaped by ascetical practices and rooted in a desire totally to surrender themselves to the will of God. A leading figure in this movement was the hermit and mystic Anthony of Egypt (251–356), whose life, chronicled by Athanasius of Alexandria (296–373), exercised an influence on both Western and Eastern monasticism.⁴⁸ Most important for our study, however, are two parallels between the experiences of the early martyrs we have already examined and those of Anthony. First, the mystics' union with Christ, enhanced wisdom and ability to heal the sick are derived from their ascetical state, through which they claim to offer themselves wholly to God.⁴⁹ And, second, Anthony's ascetical way of life is said to be generative, consoling countless numbers of men and women who either sought his advice or wished to model their lives on his.⁵⁰ Though Anthony did not die a martyr's death, he was seen as a man who had successfully sacrificed his life to God — having lived what would later be described as a white martyrdom. He is portrayed as someone who died to his passions and who received from his union with the divine similar metaphysical benefits.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ludlow, *The Early Church*, p. 153, Thomas S. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (Chicago, 1977), p. 65, Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London, 2009), p. 206.

⁴⁷ Robert McQueen, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford, 1980), p. 118.

⁴⁸ Ludlow, *The Early Church*, p. 145.

⁴⁹ H. Ellershaw, *Life of Antony, Select Writings of Athanasius*, (New York 1924), pp. 195-221.

⁵⁰ *Life of Anthony*, p. 219.

⁵¹ *Life of Anthony*, p. 209.

Descriptions of early ascetics such as Anthony later formed a literary resource for monks and devout Christians.⁵² Examples can be found in the homilies of bishops such as Basil of Caesarea (330–379) in the East and Augustine of Hippo in the West. These prelates attempted to rearticulate the martyrs' radical self-offering to God in a way that both resonated with and helped to form post-persecution Christians. As Johan Leemans points out, Basil of Caesarea attempted when preaching on the fabled life of the Christian centurion and martyr Gordius to 'recontextualise' the substance of the martyr's life into a monastic one.⁵³ Gordius prayed, fasted and lived in the desert, and in the same way the ascetical life in a hermitage or monastery could prepare religious for a life of total self-offering.⁵⁴ The martyr was granted divine revelations because of his suffering for God, and likewise the monk, striving to be free of everything that prevented his union with God, was said to receive spiritual insight. Basil thus 'seamlessly makes the connection between Gordius "the ideal monk" and Gordius "the martyr"'.⁵⁵

In one of his homilies, Augustine similarly invites Christians to consider how the lives of the martyrs illustrate the 'completeness of the Christian faith'.⁵⁶ In another, he interprets the lives of the martyrs as a model for all Christians since, even if the latter do not die for love of Christ, they can consistently 'give up what they love for the love of God', thereby living a martyr's life.⁵⁷ And later, Gregory the Great (540–604) would take a similar approach: 'Even though we do not bend our bodily

⁵² Cf. Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 70–72; Averil Cameron, 'Ascetic Closure and the End of Antiquity', in *Asceticism*, ed. by Vincent Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (New York, 1995), p. 153; Peter Brown, 'The Saint as Exemplar in Early Antiquity', in *Saints and Virtues*, ed. by John Stratton Hawley (Berkeley; Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 1–14.

⁵³ 'Martyr, Monk and Victor of Paganism: An Analysis of Basil of Caesarea's Panegyric Sermon on Gordius', in *More than Memory: Discourse of Martyrdom in the History of Christianity*, ed. by Johan Leemans (Leuven, 2005), pp. 45, 47.

⁵⁴ Leemans, 'Martyr, Monk and Victor of Paganism', p. 71.

⁵⁵ Leemans, 'Martyr, Monk and Victor of Paganism', p. 75.

⁵⁶ Augustine of Hippo, 'Sermon on Martyrdom', in *Essential Sermons*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York, 2007), p. 383 (sermon 51).

⁵⁷ Augustine, 'Sermon on Martyrdom', *Essential Sermons*, p. 383.

neck to the sword, nevertheless with the spiritual sword we slay in our soul carnal desires' and 'if, with the help of the Lord, we strive to observe the virtue of patience, even though we live in the peace of the Church, nevertheless we bear the palm of martyrdom'.⁵⁸

3. Self-Offering to God in the Medieval Period

The historian Giles Constable has suggested that monks and nuns in the medieval period 'regarded themselves, and were regarded by others, as the successors of the martyrs and confessors', and that their desire to 'suffer with and for Christ' gave rise to ascetical practices.⁵⁹ He divides these practices into two forms: 'deprivation' and 'active asceticism'. The former included the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as well as fasting, silence, solitude and the general attempt to subordinate desires to the will of God; the latter involved active impositions upon the body such as wearing hair shirts, flagellation, kissing the diseased flesh of the sick, or choosing a life of endless travel.⁶⁰

By the early sixth century, however, a Rule composed by Benedict of Nursia (480–547) dominated Western monasticism, and focused primarily on acts of 'deprivation'. Once again, it was believed that these practices deepened one's relationship with Jesus Christ through mystical sharing in his suffering. The Benedictine Peter Damian (d. 1073) wanted to 'undergo the martyrdom of Christ' but, lacking any opportunity, wrote that 'I show at least the desire of a fervent soul by destroying myself with beating'.⁶¹ Francis of Assisi (1181–1226), embracing radical poverty and humbling himself as a beggar for God, is said to have been so close to

⁵⁸ Alfred C. Rush, 'Spiritual Martyrdom in St Gregory the Great', *Theological Studies*, 23 (1962), 545–672 (pp. 579–80).

⁵⁹ Giles Constable, *Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 11.

⁶⁰ Cf. Louis Gougaud, *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1925); *Le Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, ed. by Marcell Viller *et al.*, 17 vols (Paris, 1964), vi, 977–81; i, 102–10; v, 392–408.

⁶¹ Constable, 'Attitudes Toward Self-Inflicted Suffering in the Middle Ages' in *The Ninth Stephen J. Brademas Lecture Series*, (Brookline, 1982), p. 20.

Christ that he mystically received the wounds of the crucifixion on his hands and feet.⁶² And, Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), in her *Dialogue of Divine Providence*, suggests that suffering detaches the body from material concerns and unites it all the more to Christ.⁶³

By the outset of the fifteenth century, this disposition had been presented in the *Imitatio*. There, Kempis continues the early patristic tradition of linking the crucifixion of Christ to the religious life of every Christian, asking ‘which of the saints in the world hath been without the cross and tribulation?’. At the core of this logic, Kempis argues that:

If indeed there had been anything better and more profitable to the health of men than to suffer, Christ would surely have shown it by word and example. For both the disciples who followed Him, and all who desire to follow Him, He plainly exhorted to bear their cross [...] So now that we have thoroughly read and studied all things, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.⁶⁴

In common with the New Testament and the early Christian communities, and consistently with the ascetic life of various medieval women and men, Kempis concludes that the loving self-offering of Christ and the suffering that followed inherently constitute a part of the Christian life. Choosing to walk with Jesus Christ is thought to mean taking up a cross to follow him.

4. The Reformation of Martyrdom in the Early Modern Period

This ongoing recontextualization of the early Christian martyrs’ religious experience took on new immediacy after the Protestant Reformation and with the new evangelical demands that took missionaries to the four corners of the world. Anabaptists, Calvinists, Lutherans, members of the Church of England, Catholics, and others died at each others’ hands, suffering in the ongoing European wars of religion

⁶² Arnold I. Davidson, ‘Miracles of Bodily Transformation: How St Francis Received the Stigmata’, *Critical Inquiry*, 35 (Spring 2009), 451–80; Gougoud, *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques du Moyen Âge*, pp. 78–90.

⁶³ Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. by Suzanne Nofke (New York, 1980), p. 154.

⁶⁴ *Imitatio*, II, 15.

from c. 1524 to c. 1648, and individual men and women, holding fast to their faith, willingly suffered interrogation, torture, civil trials and horrific forms of execution. Once again, Christians struggled to articulate the divine meaning of martyrdom amidst this early modern theatre of violence, persecution and death. When Reginald, Cardinal Pole (1500–1558) wrote to Henry VIII in 1536, seriously chastising his cousin for the executions of Thomas More (1478–1535) and John Cardinal Fisher (1469–1535), he proclaimed that martyrdom is an unshakable witness to divine truth, writing ‘Through perverse human reasoning and interpretation [the written book] can be distorted and fashioned in many forms, whereas those that are written in the blood of the martyrs cannot be corrupted’.⁶⁵ Clearly during the Reformation period, the testimony of blood on bodies, as ‘living books’, in many ways superseded the ink on paper of Christian hagiography and Christians had to discover new meaning in their sufferings for God as they faced new dangers. To do so, they combined the cultural memory of the early Christian martyrs with a humanist emphasis on virtue, accuracy, good rhetoric and a profound interest in antiquity.⁶⁶ The result of this confluence is evident in works such as the *Actes and Monuments* (1563) or ‘Book of Martyrs’, by the Protestant historian and hagiographer John Foxe (1516–1587). In this massive tome, Foxe meticulously gathered eyewitness and archival testimony and wove it together to great rhetorical effect. He suggests that the martyrdom of Protestants is in direct continuity with that of the ancient martyrs, that the Protestant martyrs are

⁶⁵ Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 267, quoting Reginaldi Poli Cardinalis Britanni, ad Henricum Octauum Britanniae Regem, pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione, libri quatuor. Note: This book was first printed at 1538 by Antonius Bladus in Rome.

⁶⁶ Cf. Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York, 2005). In chapter two, entitled: ‘A Renaissance Martyr’, Knowles presents an argument substantiating the serious role that humanists played in the writing of martyrdom hagiography. She argues that many authors understood the lives of ancient martyrs as presenting virtues that could, through the use of ‘rhetorical imagination’ (p. 55) form the character of the early modern person (pp. 58, 62), and that, in fact, the humanists understood ‘Their reclamation of the heroic self sacrifice of pre-Constantine Christians as a fully imitable act of contemporary value [...] The early Christian centuries, in other words, were perceived to have immediate relevance to the present’ (p. 96).

symbols of hope to spur courage among the faithful, and that they offer an apocalyptic portent of a final victory, when ‘true Christians’ will be righteously received before God in heaven.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, Catholic monks, mendicants, missionaries and laity throughout Europe were also sentenced to death and, at the same time, missionaries across the seas, from the Americas to Asia, were killed while attempting to introduce non-Europeans peoples to the Christian faith. The response of the Catholic Church throughout the period was multifaceted, and a full examination is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, we can look to the collections of hagiographies that appeared, such as those of the Carthusian Laurentius Surius (1522–1578), who emphasized the long-standing Christian tradition that to die a martyr for Christ is to be profoundly bound to him as ‘King of the Martyrs’.⁶⁸ The *Martyrologe Romain* (1600) collected and reprinted by the Jesuit François Solier tells its readers that ‘One can find no greater gift, more precious present, or more majestic sacrifice that the creature can offer [his] creator, than the one the martyrs present to him at their deaths’.⁶⁹ The Jesuit philosopher Heribert Rosweyde (1569–1629) began the momentous task of writing the encyclopaedic *Acta sanctorum* in 1604, a project taken up by the Flemish hagiographer Jean Bolland (1596–1665) in 1629, and which remains an ongoing effort of the Bollandists.

The presence of martyrdom in the early modern period inspired other Christian humanists such as the Oratorian Antonio Galloni (1556–1605), who wrote the *De Martyrum Cruciatibus* (1594) describing, with illustrations, the devices used throughout the history of the Church to torture Christians, or the Flemish philologist

⁶⁷ John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, ed. by William Byron Forbush (Nashville, 2000), book 1. For a full analysis of this monograph see: Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs’* (Cambridge, 2011).

⁶⁸ Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 277.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

and humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), who wrote *De Cruce* in 1593.⁷⁰ In 1558, the Roman catacombs were opened to the public as a mass grave of Christian martyrs and as a pilgrimage destination, becoming the subject of books such as *Roma sotterranea* (1632) by the Italian scholar Antonio Bosio (1575–1629). Then, in 1588, the Congregation of Rites and Ceremonies was established in the papal curia, among other things to supervise the distribution of martyrs' relics to Catholic communities throughout Europe and around the world.⁷¹ During the early modern period, dying for love of Jesus Christ had once again become a real part of Christian life, and through popular devotion and on the printed page a considerable effort was made to articulate its religious meaning.

5. Devoutly Offering One's Self to God in Early Modern France

This was as true in France as anywhere, where the Wars of Religion tore deeply into the kingdom, as Catholics and Huguenots (Calvinists) battled for religious and political superiority. The popular response to these conflicts was various and complex.⁷² According to Natalie Zemon Davis, a prominent feature of violence in France in this period was the 'religious riot', defined as a 'violent action, with words or weapons, undertaken against religious targets by people who are not acting officially and formally as agents of political and ecclesiastical authority'.⁷³ Most intriguing in her analysis of this phenomenon was the role of the clergy. Davis discovered that, in several cases, clerics either organized the events or were 'active

⁷⁰ Cf. Jetze Touber, *Law, Medicine, and Engineering in the Cult of the Saints in Counter-Reformation Rome: The Hagiographical Works of Antonio Galloni 1556 to 1605* (Boston, 2014), pp. 193–249.

⁷¹ See: Simon Ditchfield, 'Reading Rome as a Sacred Landscape, ca.1586-1635' in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Will Coster *et al* (Cambridge, 2005).

⁷² Cf. R. J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion: 1559–1598* (Oxford, 2002); J. H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975); and Philip Benedict, 'Un roi, une loi, deux fois: Parameters for the History of Catholic-Protestant Co-existence in France, 1555–1685', in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, ed. by O. Grell and B. Scribner (New York, 1996), pp. 65–93.

⁷³ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present*, 59 (1973), 3–178 (p. 52).

members' in them.⁷⁴ She also suggested that 'mixed cues' were given in the sermons of priests and pastors on issues of heresy and idolatry that aroused these violent manifestations of religious conflict.⁷⁵ Each side, stirred by the rhetoric of their respective religious leaders, sought through (often violent) demonstration to name 'truth', bringing about 'purification' or 'exacting justice' in the name of God.⁷⁶

A dramatic alternative to such aggression developed in a form of Christian humanism, called by Bremond *humanisme dévot*; the most well known of its proponents being François de Sales, Bishop of Geneva (1567–1622). The pastoral labours of this prelate in France, and two of his major works, *Introduction à la vie dévote* and *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, had a vast influence on French spirituality, translating and adapting complex theological ideas into a praxis suitable for clerics, religious and the laity. Significantly for our study, this influence extended well into the lives of the spiritual authors of the Society of Jesus.⁷⁷ De Sales' earliest response to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination (made in 1587) indicates a clear break from the so-called 'rites of violence', and reveals a fundamental part of his contribution to early modern French spirituality.

As a young man at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont, de Sales suffered because of an inner conflict over the Calvinist idea that some are predestined by God to divine condemnation to hell. After six months, he is said to have had an epiphany while praying before the statue of the Black Virgin in the Church of St Étienne-des-Grès, Paris, and offered himself to God, saying: 'If I be predestined to glorify the supreme

⁷⁴ Davis, 'The Rites of Violence', p. 67.

⁷⁵ Davis, 'The Rites of Violence', pp. 67–69.

⁷⁶ Davis, 'The Rites of Violence', pp. 55–65.

⁷⁷ Francis de Sales attended the Jesuit Collège de Clermont in Paris for his formal education. His later writings were of great interest to several seventeenth-century French Jesuits, who either promoted them or incorporated his spiritual doctrine into their own works, e.g. Nicholas Caussin, *Traicté de la condvite spirituelle, selon l'esprit du B. François de Sales, Euesque et Prince de Geneue* (Paris, 1636); Étienne Luzvic, *Mirouers de philothée dans lesquels on voit les divers visages de l'âme* (Paris, 1621); and Pierre Dagonel, *Avis chrétiens et impotans à toutes sortes des personnes, extraits fidèlement des écrits et de la vie de feu le François de Sales* (Paris, 1626).

justice of God by my damnation, I accept willingly the end assigned to me in the eternal decrees.’⁷⁸ In lovingly accepting this possible expression of God’s will, he surmounted his own suffering, and soon afterwards concluded the protestant teaching to be false. Later on, as a bishop, he argued that ‘whoever preaches with love, preaches sufficiently against heretics, though he may never say a controversial word’.⁷⁹ This desire to offer himself to God and to be directed by one’s love for God, de Sales refers to as a life of ‘devotion’ that is nothing else but

Spiritual activity and vivacity by means of which Divine Love works in us, and causes us to work briskly and wholeheartedly; and just as charity leads us to a general practice of all God’s Commandments, so devotion leads us to practise them readily and diligently.⁸⁰

Indeed, de Sales proposed that our ability to love God was both natural to and necessary for the human identity, and that it is better to love obedience than to fear disobedience.⁸¹ Furthermore, he suggested that when something is done or suffered out of love of God, it is done not with fear but with joy.⁸² At a time when various clerics, religious and laity found it necessary to honour their God through acts of impassioned violence, de Sales gently promoted a spirituality of love and absolute devotion to Jesus Christ as the necessary disposition of the time.

At various points throughout his *Vie dévote*, and consistently with our review of early ascetical practices in Christianity, de Sales invokes the submission of martyrs as a model for this disposition. In his very definition of *la vie dévote*, he observed that ‘Fire and flame, wheel and sword seemed flowers and perfumes to the martyrs

⁷⁸ Histoire Littéraire, I, 89.

⁷⁹ Histoire Littéraire, I, 109–10.

⁸⁰ Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. by Michael Day (London, 1962), part I, p. 1.

⁸¹ Joseph F. Chorpénning presents a fascinating example of this religious perspective as it is expressed in art and culture: Christ as the divine painter of the human identity. Cf. Joseph F. Chorpénning, “‘In Our Image and Likeness’”: Image-Making and Spiritual Formation in the Introduction to the Devout Life’, in *Encountering Anew the Familiar: The Introduction to the Devout Life After 400 Years*, ed. by Joseph F. Chorpénning (Rome, 2010), p. 76.

⁸² Francois de Sales, *Oeuvres complètes de François de Sales*, trans. by P. Blaise (Paris, 1821), book IV, pp. 84, 113; book VI, pp. 67, 78–79.

because they were devout; if devotion can make the most cruel torments, and even death, seem sweet, what will it do for the practice of virtue?’⁸³ The martyrs are to be considered a model of ‘invincible firmness’ amidst adversities.⁸⁴ He suggests that the struggles of everyday life are but ‘comforts’ and ‘roses’ compared to the sufferings of a martyr, and yet are to be lovingly embraced with the patience that the martyrs exemplified in choosing to embrace death.⁸⁵ The small trials of ‘headaches’, the loss of a ‘handkerchief’, the ‘sneer of a neighbour’ or the feeling of reticence when ‘openly performing a religious duty’ should, he claims, be ‘accepted and embraced with love’, for they are considered ‘most pleasing to God’s Goodness’ and, are in fact, ‘fertile field for gathering in spiritual riches’.⁸⁶

Within the theological context of de Sales’ extensive influence lies what Bremond refers to as *l’École Française*, formed by Pierre, Cardinal du Bérulle (1575–1629), along with his students John Eudes (1601–1680) and Jean-Jacques Olier (1608–1657); indeed de Sales self-effacingly looked to the cardinal as a model of the sanctity he desired to emulate.⁸⁷ An important element of this school of thought, which reflects its continuity with our review of ascetical religious practice within the Church, is its emphasis on the person and life of Jesus Christ as the model of human life. It therefore presents a religious worldview that is anthropocentric — focussing on the formation of the human person — and, at the same time, theocentric — proposing that the fullest expression of human formation can only come by allowing the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to dwell within the person as its ultimate model.

⁸³ Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, part I, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, part V, p. 7.

⁸⁵ Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, part III, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, part III, p. 35.

⁸⁷ *Histoire Littéraire*, I, 97. Bérulle, often called the forefather of the ‘French School of Spirituality’, was chaplain to Henry IV of France. The cardinal, who was deeply informed by his Jesuit education, his experience of the *Exercices*, and his Jesuit friends in Paris, had an enormous impact on Catholic spirituality in early modern France. Cf. *Histoire Littéraire* I, 909–21. For further details on Bérulle see: Yves Krumenacker, *L’école française de spiritualité: des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes* (Paris, 1998).

As William Thompson points out, Bérulle and his collaborators develop de Sales' work on devout love for Christ, asserting that the human origin is in God and that each person will only find his or her fulfilment on returning to the divine Creator.⁸⁸

Eudes describes this idea succinctly when he writes:

All sacred texts show quite clearly that Jesus Christ must live in you; that you must not live except in him; that his life must be your life, and your life must be a continuation and expression of his'.⁸⁹

In other words, it was thought that people are most themselves when they attune their life and actions to the life of Jesus Christ.

Bérulle proposes that 'God, creating and forming all things, refers them and relates them to himself',⁹⁰ while Olier writes that human society has been modelled on the divine relationship found in the Trinity: 'God wants each person to love one's neighbour as oneself', just as God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit love each other perfectly in heaven.⁹¹ To live out this divine union, Olier suggests that each person must work at a process of self-sacrifice or purgation, which he refers to as 'annihilation':

Now the best disposition by which we can be prepared to allow the Spirit to possess us, and to be grounded by [him] in these virtues, is interior annihilation. So much so that as soon as we allow ourselves to be annihilated by this Divine Spirit throughout our whole being, we will experience ourselves as re-established by him with a disposition toward every virtue as well as with a readiness and inclination to practice all of them when needed.⁹²

This process of emptying oneself is indeed a form of sacrifice, which involves both an inner acceptance of God as the model for life and an external disposition to a life of humble service. One example of this disposition was manifested for Bérulle in the

⁸⁸ Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique, 1575–1611* (Paris, 1952), p. 36; Bérulle and the French School: Selected Writings, ed. and trans. by William M. Thompson (New York, 1989.), pp. 32–33.

⁸⁹ John Eudes, *The Life and the Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls*, trans. by Wilfrid E. Myatt and Patrick J. Skinner (New York, 2012), p. 5.

⁹⁰ Bérulle, *Collationes*, 1151.

⁹¹ Jean-Jacques Olier, *La journée chrétienne* (Paris, 1838), p. 209.

⁹² Olier, 'An Introduction to the Christian Life and Virtues', in *Bérulle and the French School*, ed. and trans. Thompson, p. 228.

pious tradition of pronouncing vows, in which individuals would solemnly commit themselves to Mary, the perfect example of servitude, hoping that in this relationship with the mother of God they would find more profound ways to offer themselves to Christ, as she had, in agreeing to bear him into the world.⁹³ This Christocentric perspective on the human identity, along with an ascetical disposition of ‘annihilation’ and service, reflects a religious worldview in early-modern France that resonates with that of the authors of the *Relations*.

6. Jesuit Exercises in Lovingly Offering One’s Self to God

As Bremond illustrates, Bérulle and his followers in *l’École Française* were greatly influenced by their exposure to the *Exercises*, a text that, as we have already seen, strongly asserts a radical turn towards the life and death of Jesus Christ as a model for every human person.⁹⁴ In his meditation known as the ‘Triple Colloquy’, Loyola proposes a self-sacrificing movement, in which God the Father offers his Son Jesus to the world from the heights of divine being, Jesus responds by becoming human and offering himself on the Cross so as to ‘save the human race’, and in turn every human person is invited to emulate Christ’s sacrifice in the living out of their own Christian lives.⁹⁵ In this sense, the *Exercises* presents the self-sacrificing love of Christ as a part of God’s identity and also as the way in which human persons, made in the image of God, are meant to be. Loyola writes that a person’s love is meant to ‘manifest itself in deeds’, and that it ‘consists in mutual sharing’. God has, he continues, ‘given me of what he possesses’, and there is much ‘I ought to offer the divine Majesty’.⁹⁶ In other words, Christ has shown the world, in the fullest possible way, that at the core of love

⁹³ Paul Cochois, *Bérulle et l’école française: maître spirituel* (Paris, 1963), p. 33.

⁹⁴ *Histoire Littéraire*, I, p. 928.

⁹⁵ *SE* [107, 104, 193, 203, 231].

⁹⁶ *SE* [231, 234].

is a giving of self, a ‘sharing’; and, through Christ, human persons can be moved to imitate him by sharing all of themselves with both God and others.

Loyola proposes this kind of emulation since he situates Jesus Christ at the centre of all creation, of human salvation from sin, of history and, ultimately as the model for human life.⁹⁷ The *Exercises* accordingly invites Christians to contemplate their love for Jesus, and presumes that his life will move them to admiration, to imitation, and finally to a life of self-sacrificing love.⁹⁸ As argued by de Sales, in as much as persons are lovingly configured to Christ, they are all the more transformed by his will — a will that does not call for blind obedience but simply wants them to be who they were made to be, namely lovers of God who give of themselves to God and to others in love. The *Exercises* invites individuals to reject ‘worldly love’, that is, the inordinate affection for material things, and instead encourages them to ‘imitate Christ in bearing all injuries and all abuse and all poverty’.⁹⁹ They are called to use all things out of love for God,¹⁰⁰ and make decisions out of ‘that love which moves [them] and makes [them] choose such things that descend from above, from the love of God’.¹⁰¹ Out of love for Christ, individuals are bidden to ‘choose poverty with the poor Christ’, ‘insults’ rather than ‘honours’, and even to be ‘fools for Christ’.¹⁰² In this spirit, Loyola asks the participant to consider always: ‘What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ?’¹⁰³

When invited to imagine themselves at the foot of the Cross, readers are asked to feel ‘sorrow with Christ in sorrow, anguish with Christ in anguish, tears and deep

⁹⁷ *SE* [23, 107, 144].

⁹⁸ *SE* [146, 165–67, 344, 97, 151, 162].

⁹⁹ *SE* [93].

¹⁰⁰ *SE* [51].

¹⁰¹ *SE* [151].

¹⁰² *SE* [167].

¹⁰³ *SE* [53].

grief because of the great affliction Christ endures for me'.¹⁰⁴ They are subsequently asked to consider how 'Christ suffered for my sins', and then 'what I ought to do and suffer for him?'.¹⁰⁵ In this way, Loyola places participants at what is understood to be the central moment of Christ's self-sacrificing love, and encourages them to join in that same trajectory. The author then invites them, in his 'Contemplation to Attain Divine Love', to move from the Passion of Christ to an experience of profound love for God. There, the saint writes that this experience of God's love for both the individual and the world, and the individual's love for God in Christ, is not a passive or static action, but an essential aspect of Christ's living mission.¹⁰⁶

This disposition is immediately made clear to readers in two ways. First, they are reminded that 'Love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words'.¹⁰⁷ Love for its own sake is avarice, but love shared, in a way that is modelled upon the self-giving love of the Triune God, is divine. Loyola asks participants to draw strength from the passionate love that manifested itself amidst the shame and confusion of the Cross, and to imitate Christ, offering love to the world as he did. In this action, individuals realize not only that true identity is found in the person of Jesus Christ but also, in doing so, that this disposition of self-emptying love is indeed an inherent part of their personhood, and is therefore an integral part of living out the Christian vocation.

Second, Loyola explains how this disposition might be actualized in everyday Christian life, writing that,

Love consists in a mutual sharing of goods, for example, the lover gives and shares with the beloved what he possesses, or something of that which [he] has or is able to give; and vice versa, the beloved shares with the lover. Hence if one has knowledge, [he] should share it with the one who does not

¹⁰⁴ *SE* [203].

¹⁰⁵ *SE* [197].

¹⁰⁶ *SE* [230-7].

¹⁰⁷ *SE* [230].

possess it; and so also if one has honours, or riches. Thus, one always gives to the other.¹⁰⁸

It is here that the participants may gather their entire experience of God within the prayers of the *Exercises*, and make themselves into an offering. Such an action is a way of living out a self-giving love, and Loyola articulates this offering in a prayer:

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.¹⁰⁹

The *Exercises* thus propose that the suffering of Christ on the Cross is a redemptive action of absolute self-giving love that constitutes an attribute of the human identity. In choosing to embrace the daily suffering of life or accept suffering out of love for God, is therefore a way to unite oneself with Jesus Christ, not merely as an act of allegiance or perseverance, but as the living out of a disposition that is part of the human identity and mission. Life, according to the vision set out by Loyola, is a continual process of offering back to God what has been given: a self-sacrifice that can involve something of ‘poverty’, ‘calumny’, ‘violence’ and even death — a disposition held out of love for Jesus Christ, who is believed to have begun this trajectory when he himself accepted suffering and death on his Cross.

7. Embracing Jesus Christ through his Cross in the ‘Louis Lallemand School of Spirituality’

The interpretation of this theme in the *Exercises* took many forms among French Jesuits of the early modern period.¹¹⁰ Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, it is the

¹⁰⁸ *SE* [231].

¹⁰⁹ *SE* [234].

¹¹⁰ For example, Françoise Poiré (1584–1637) suggests that the lives of saints are a model illustrating that human perfection lies in complete and loving self-abandonment to the providence of God. See: Françoise Poiré, *La Science des saints, qui est la science de chercher Dieu, et de se donner entièrement à Iuy* (Paris, 1638). Similarly, Jacques Salián (1557–1640) suggested that from a loving relationship with God flowed the human virtues of sweetness, kindness, attentiveness, vigilance, fervour and zeal. See: Jacques Salián, *Traité de l’amour de Dieu* (Paris, 1634). Nicholas du Sault (1600–1655) wrote eloquently about the virtue of self-abnegation and the supernatural gift of freedom from the material world that comes from putting God before all else. See: Nicholas du Sault, *Traité de la confiance en Dieu* (Paris, 1638).

reflection on these matters made by Louis Lallemand that directly influenced the authors of the *Relations*, and is said best to identify the source of their understanding of suffering for God. It was the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on his Cross, and the willingness of Christians to embrace it as a general disposition of life, which particularly inspired his religious worldview. Key to this worldview was Lallemand's belief that each Jesuit should be prepared to accept suffering in the same spirit as the Christian martyrs, both with and for God. He therefore conjoined the Cross to the very founding of the Jesuit order, emphasizing that Jesus Christ had appeared to Loyola in a vision, holding his Cross and saying, 'I will be propitious to you in Rome'.¹¹¹ Lallemand appears to have considered, on the one hand, that suffering for God was not something to be sought out but, on the other, that if it presents itself to a Jesuit, he should joyfully embrace it as a divine opportunity. He begins with the fundamental principle that any person faced with suffering, whether as a choice or as an unavoidable circumstance of life, should not try to work out how to 'contend' with it or 'dispute against it', but rather turn immediately to the example of God.¹¹²

Indeed a consistent aspect of his religious worldview, which we will also see present in of our authors throughout the *Relations*, is the idea that many forms of suffering are actually given by God as an opportunity for spiritual growth:

We must not look for our crosses and afflictions in the light of evils which are the cause to us of suffering, or as mortifications which lower us in the eyes of the world; but we must look at them, after the example of our Lord, in the eternal counsels of God, in the decrees of His providence, and in the designs of His love towards us in the Heart of Jesus Christ, who has chosen them for us, and presents them to us as the material of those crowns which He is preparing for us, and as a trial of our courage and fidelity in His service.¹¹³

¹¹¹ *SD*, p. 63.

¹¹² *SD*, p. 46.

¹¹³ *SD*, p. 60.

Taking the image of the martyr's 'crown', Louis Lallemand suggests that God lovingly chooses certain sufferings for his ministers so that they might become better servants. Furthermore, he proposes that the more one has 'wholly given [oneself] to God by a life of prayer', the less one is 'pained by calumnies or by anything that may befall [him]'; the soul of such an individual is immune from the effects of suffering. In fact, 'Whenever, at the call of God, we enter into states of toil, suffering, and humiliation [...] then neither will labours overwhelm us, nor persecutions disturb us, and often great austerities will not destroy our health'.¹¹⁴

He argues that all should bless God for the 'opportunity to suffer for Christ',¹¹⁵ and proposes that the Holy Spirit provides strength to endure suffering for God that allows one even to seek out the 'divine odour' of the Cross and experience 'delight in crosses'.¹¹⁶ More than this, 'the more love that we have for humiliation and the cross, the wiser we are', for though suffering appears contrary to human nature, it is actually part of the mysterious journey towards a more profound understanding of how to be a person in the world.¹¹⁷ To support these interpretations, Louis Lallemand refers to various saints who embraced their suffering for God. Francis Xavier is highlighted for having exhausted himself to death in Asia, while the years of ulcers, stomach bleeds and extreme pain experienced by the Dutch mystic Lidwina (1380–1433) are presented as a model of patience.¹¹⁸ Loyola is celebrated for his love of being mocked, and Francis of Assisi for his love of abnegation.¹¹⁹

Louis Lallemand suggested Jesus Christ himself as the model for this embrace of suffering and, like Olier, he appears to have identified this disposition as a process

¹¹⁴ *SD*, pp. 60–61.

¹¹⁵ *SD*, p. 295.

¹¹⁶ *SD*, p. 140.

¹¹⁷ *SD*, pp. 154–55.

¹¹⁸ *SD*, p. 60.

¹¹⁹ *SD*, p. 154.

of ‘annihilation’ that finds its ideal form in him. His biographer Champion describes the spiritual father as having modelled his own life on ‘The spirit of annihilation shown by the Son of God in His Incarnation’, using it as the ‘model of humility’, so that he came to ‘Love his own abjection’.¹²⁰ Like Loyola in the *Exercises*, Lallemand presents Jesus Christ as having ‘abased’ himself to ‘the manger and the cross; to an infant state; to a life poor, laborious, obscure, to persecutions and to death’, and suggests that ‘we ought also to annihilate ourselves after his example’.¹²¹ He refers to the writings of Ignatius of Antioch that we examined earlier in this chapter, emphasizing his desire that ‘lions, after tearing his body in pieces, might also consume his bones’ so that ‘nothing might remain of the holocaust which he had consecrated to God in order to prove himself His worthy disciple’.¹²² Self-annihilation is described as a ‘gift’ of God that helps to lead a person closer to his or her Creator.¹²³

The desired effect of this disposition is twofold. Louis Lallemand suggests first that, as among the early Christian community, human suffering is given meaning and purpose when it is conjoined to the suffering of Jesus Christ. Second, in either choosing to embrace a form of suffering as an opportunity to grow in union with God, or accepting the unpreventable suffering that comes in life, there can be a response of self-emptying, willing acceptance or even surrender to the divine will which allows God to be more deeply present in one’s life.

As we have seen in chapter one, Lallemand proposed to his followers that the greatest opportunity to embrace this spirit of self-annihilation was during Tertianship, when a Jesuit prepares to pronounce his final vows. In what Aloys Pottier, Bremond

¹²⁰ *SD*, pp. 6–7.

¹²¹ *SD*, p. 90.

¹²² *SD*, p. 59.

¹²³ *SD*, p. 189.

and Joseph de Guibert all regard as part of Lallemand's unique contribution to seventeenth-century French spirituality, he believed that, during this time, a Jesuit may have a 'second conversion', when he embraces all the more this religious ideal by totally devoting himself to God, in order to find perfection in the Christian life.¹²⁴

Most saints and religious who arrive at perfection generally undergo two conversions; one by which they give themselves up to the service of God; the other by which they devote themselves entirely to perfection. This is observable in the Apostles, when our Lord called them, and when He sent down upon them the Holy Spirit [...] This second conversion does not take place in all religious, and it is owing to their own negligence. The time of this conversion in our case [Jesuit training] is generally the third year of noviciate.¹²⁵

Tertianship is, therefore, the moment when Jesuits might offer themselves completely to God and Lallemand proposes two essential requirements: first, a deeper 'love for our Lord', and second, a 'sincere contempt for self', in which 'self-love', 'ambition', success and 'esteem' are rejected and 'self-annihilation', 'self-abnegation' and the 'abjection' or the contempt of others are embraced out of love for God.¹²⁶ Lallemand claims that this disposition was that of the Apostles and of Loyola who, after his own conversion, was ready to 'shed the last drop of his blood' in defence of his union with Christ.¹²⁷

And as we have already suggested, the best context in which a young Jesuit could find this perfection, according to Louis Lallemand, was that of the missions, particularly *Nouvelle-France*. He believed that serving among the Amerindian peoples created the ideal religious space to grow in and live out this 'second conversion', since 'it was more fruitful in labours and crosses, because it offered a less brilliant career, and thereby contributed more than any others to the sanctification

¹²⁴ Cf. Aloys Pottier, *Le Père Louis Lallemand et les grands spirituels de son temps* (Paris, 1928), introduction; *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 453–61; Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 355.

¹²⁵ *SD*, p. 83.

¹²⁶ *SD*, p. 84.

¹²⁷ *SD*, p. 85.

of the missionary'.¹²⁸ Moreover, since it was decided on several occasions that his own health was not strong enough to endure the physical hardships of *Nouvelle-France*, Champion informs us that Lallemand 'always exerted himself to procure fervent labourers for that mission, and to render it in France all the service that lay in his power'.¹²⁹

8. Union with the Suffering Christ in The Land of Crosses

In different ways throughout the *Relations*, the authors clearly articulate their view that *Nouvelle-France* is, as Le Jeune writes, the 'country of the cross'. Having examined the ascetical elements of key spiritual movements in early modern France, and, in particular, the religious understanding of suffering outlined in the *Exercises* and interpreted by Louis Lallemand, we can now turn to the content of the texts, and begin to see what these words meant for Le Jeune, Brébeuf, Le Mercier, Jogues, Vimont, Jérôme Lalemant, Ragueneau and their companions.

Louis Lallemand's declaration that joining this particular mission was the best means for their generation to live out a Jesuit's 'second conversion' suggests that this was one of the principal reasons why these men committed themselves to the evangelical project. A desire to be radically united to God and to make that possible for others, ideas of self-annihilation, suffering and the Cross, and the possibility of offering one's whole life to Jesus Christ in the mission, therefore formed the lens through which all of their experiences were perceived and then documented. As we shall see in this section, the authors understood that they had chosen to enter a land filled with crosses or, more specifically, into an ongoing experience of suffering that continuously brought them closer to experiencing something of the Cross of Christ. This was thus an opportunity or even a gift for them that was provided by God and

¹²⁸ *SD*, p. 11.

¹²⁹ *SD*, p. 12.

subsequently became a central paradigm for the mission. They believed that their sufferings, and those of the Amerindians who embraced Christianity, could bring about greater personal sanctity, conversions and innumerable spiritual benefits.

Though Le Jeune wrote that ‘To paint you the hardship of the way, I have neither pen nor brush that could do it’,¹³⁰ various authors did describe in detail a life in *Nouvelle-France* that was filled with suffering. Le Jeune suggested that ‘A soul very thirsty for the Son of God, I mean for suffering, would find enough here to satisfy it’.¹³¹ To live and labour among the Amerindian peoples was a process of self-emptying, in which a person must, as it were, ‘become a *sauvage*’, or to some degree live like one, thereby ‘contenting himself with a very large and very heavy cross’.¹³² He described the air of *Nouvelle-France* as the ‘air of heaven’, since there anyone could joyfully ‘suffer for heaven.’¹³³ In 1636, he wrote that joining the mission could be construed as strange since, ‘to be willing to die in the midst of barbarism, is a language which is not spoken in the school of nature’.¹³⁴ And yet it is the principle desire that he deems necessary to ‘live and to die in the Cross of Jesus’.¹³⁵ He declared that his *confrère* Ragueneau was in fact happy to be sent among the Hurons for he was ‘going to sacrifice himself to the Cross of Jesus Christ for his glory’.¹³⁶ And finally, he concluded that the vast geography of the missions was ‘strewn with Crosses’.¹³⁷

This description of *Nouvelle-France* as a land of crosses was very appealing to the authors — a fact reinforced when they suggest to their readers that this was a

¹³⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 244–45.

¹³¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 201.

¹³² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 92.

¹³³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 4.

¹³⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 8.

¹³⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 16.

¹³⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 214–15.

¹³⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 134–35.

special incentive to join the mission.¹³⁸ Not unlike the martyrs Ignatius of Antioch and Perpetua, or the monks of the medieval period, the authors present their own ‘crosses’ as privileged opportunities of self-abnegation that unite them with the suffering Christ.

One of the most striking examples of this is found in the excerpts from Brébeuf’s diary that are mentioned by Ragueneau in the 1648–1649 *Relation*:

At one time I find in his writings that, while in prayer, God detached him from all his senses, and united him to himself; again, that he was delighted in God, and fervently embraced him; at other times, he says that his whole heart was transported to God by rushes of love which were ecstatic. But above all, this love was tender with respect to the sacred person of Jesus Christ, and of Jesus Christ’s suffering.¹³⁹

Here it is emphasized that the missionary’s passionate love for Christ included a ‘respect’ for his ‘suffering’, a respect that several others were moved to emulate. Brébeuf is said to have desired a ‘perfect union’ with the Christ whose love he proclaimed, and the means of that union was perseverance in suffering for him.¹⁴⁰ In 1636 the veteran missionary wrote of his belief that ‘love is as strong as death’, suggesting that any suffering he might endure in *Nouvelle-France*, even to the point of death, was at the very least matched by the love he had for God and his desire to be united with God’s Son.¹⁴¹

While praying with the *Exercises* in 1634, Ragueneau wrote that ‘Our Lord appeared to him crowned with thorns’.¹⁴² When Brébeuf experienced a vision of Mary, the mother of Jesus, he told Ragueneau that her heart was ‘pierced with three swords’, manifesting the wounds of her son’s execution.¹⁴³ In another instance, Brébeuf is described as having a mystical encounter with Christ, asking him ‘what do

¹³⁸ Cf. Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 78; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 142–43; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1642–43), pp. 131–32.

¹³⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 69–70.

¹⁴⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 52–53.

¹⁴¹ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 59.

¹⁴² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 78.

¹⁴³ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 79.

you want me to do?'; the voice of Jesus replies 'follow me'. Instinctively Brébeuf took up his copy of the *Imitatio* and meditated on the chapter entitled 'The Royal Way of the Holy Cross', where Kempis invites every Christian to embrace the model of Christ crucified.¹⁴⁴ At a later date, Brébeuf quotes the same author when, at prayer, he is taken up by the statement 'I will show him how great the things are that I must suffer for Jesus'. This almost seems like a response to the question Brébeuf would have asked while praying with the *Exercises*: 'What ought I to do and suffer for him?'¹⁴⁵

These rather extraordinary mystical examples of unity with God in suffering reflect a more general view expressed by the authors throughout the *Relations*. In 1637, Le Jeune confessed that he felt burdened by suffering, yet indicated that his desire to embrace it came from the mutual sense of love that existed between him and his God.¹⁴⁶ Later, he suggested that whoever has made a strong resolution to work for Jesus Christ 'ought to love the Cross of Jesus Christ'.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, he wrote that the more one endures any suffering in the mission, 'the more we are like our Lord'.¹⁴⁸ And, in his 1640 *Relation*, explaining to the readership the slow results of the mission in terms of the number of baptisms among the Amerindian peoples, he wrote that 'those who work under the standard of the cross [...] sow in tears', suggesting that the tears that may come from the missionaries' struggles would ultimately bear fruit among the peoples they served.¹⁴⁹ Le Mercier too expressed his desire to follow the example of 'him [Jesus Christ] who has endured so much for us'.¹⁵⁰ Lalemant associates the poverty of his cabin among the Amerindians with the suffering that

¹⁴⁴ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 61–62.

¹⁴⁵ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 59.

¹⁴⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 236.

¹⁴⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 202–03.

¹⁴⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 189–90.

¹⁴⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 142–43.

¹⁵⁰ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 230.

Jesus had experienced as a baby.¹⁵¹ In another instance, describing the harsh conditions, hunger and dangers he endured while living among the Amerindians, he asked: ‘is not that leading a life which has naught of sweetness except the cross of Jesus Christ?’¹⁵² When rebuffed by a medicine man he associates this rejection with that of Christ, writing that ‘If the Saviour of the world was treated like that, have not his servants cause to glorify themselves in God, while bearing their master’s livery?’¹⁵³

Jérôme Lalemant argued that the suffering the missionaries experienced living among the Amerindians was more profitable to them than any ‘temporary gift for language’ or the ‘gift of healing’ that God has sometimes granted other missionaries in history, for ‘sufferings endured for a crucified saviour are preferable to all that’.¹⁵⁴ He pointed out that readily sharing in the cross of Christ is ‘the only entrance to paradise’.¹⁵⁵ And when it was believed that their deaths were imminent, Brébeuf, Le Mercier and Ragueneau added their names to a final epitaph that was included in the 1637–38 *Relation*:

It is now that we consider ourselves truly to belong to his Society. May he be forever blessed for having appointed us to this country, among many others better than we, to aid him in bearing his [Jesus Christ’s] cross.¹⁵⁶

Though on this occasion they survived the threat of angry Huron leaders, their sentiments are clear. Brébeuf’s impassioned desire lovingly to share in the suffering of Christ; Le Jeune’s idea that all Jesuits in *Nouvelle-France* labour under the banner of the Cross; Le Mercier’s hope to join in suffering with Christ; Lalemant’s ability to

¹⁵¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 63. Le Jeune makes this same reference five years earlier on Christmas Eve, 1634, writing that their meagre meal of one porcupine for eighteen people must have been like the simplicity of Joseph, Mary and Jesus in the stable: Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 271.

¹⁵² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 39–40.

¹⁵³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 172–73.

¹⁵⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 40–41.

¹⁵⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 218.

¹⁵⁶ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), pp. 28–30.

associate the discomforts of the mission and calumny with the sufferings of Christ: all illustrate their belief that suffering itself is a conduit that unites them the more to Jesus, whom they believed had suffered and died for them.

9. The Divine Gift of Suffering in the *Relations*

The choice to embrace the sufferings associated with ministry in *Nouvelle-France* is ultimately, for the authors, an option presented to them by God who is, according to Le Jeune, the ‘author of all afflictions’.¹⁵⁷ As we have seen, Louis Lallemand had encouraged the Jesuits under his tutelage to understand that ‘crosses and afflictions’ are part of the ‘eternal council of God’ and ultimately a blessing to be embraced.¹⁵⁸ This disposition is present through all the *Relations* included in this study. In 1640, Le Jeune describes this idea best when he writes to his superior in France that,

I will comfort your Reverence, assuring you that you have subjects in this new world, who make rapid progress in holiness. God bestows his favours upon them abundantly; difficulties enliven them, death is their treasure, dangers their security, sufferings their delight, death for the cross their expiation, and the living God their great reward.¹⁵⁹

From within this religious mind-set, the authors illustrate throughout their narratives the strong belief that growth in their fledgling Church will involve suffering, both for them and for their congregants. Le Jeune directly links the ‘cross’ to the new faith that the Jesuits were attempting to plant among the Amerindians: ‘Whoever has made a strong resolution to work for Jesus Christ ought to love the Cross of Jesus Christ. The Cross is the tree of life, which bears the fruits of Paradise.’¹⁶⁰ Any ‘thorns’ will not prevent the ‘springing up of roses’,¹⁶¹ for no one can ‘enter the church without a sacrifice’.¹⁶² Furthermore, he suggests that if the idea of building a seminary for young Amerindian men is to succeed, it will do so if

¹⁵⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 89.

¹⁵⁸ *SD*, pp. 60, 295.

¹⁵⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 3–4.

¹⁶⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 202–03.

¹⁶¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 111.

¹⁶² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 132.

‘crosses and trial’ are the foundations of its edifice.¹⁶³ Finally, he offers praise to God for examples of the calumny and isolation experienced among those Amerindians who accepted baptism.¹⁶⁴

Likewise, Brébeuf tells the reader that the sufferings endured while travelling over land and by water in canoes, and in general amidst the living conditions of the Amerindians, are a ‘Cross that Our Lord presents to us for his honour, and for the salvation of these poor *barbares*’.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, he shares his vision of a developed Church of the future, in which French and Amerindian Christians will mature into a community that will be known for its ‘great alms’, ‘fasts’, ‘mortifications’, ‘patience’ and even ‘martyrdoms’.¹⁶⁶ When faced with an imminent threat of death at the hand of some angry Amerindian leaders, Vimont proclaims his willingness and that of his Jesuit companions to ‘shed our blood for the conversion of these poor peoples’.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, he suggests that it is through the missionaries’ sacrifices that the Amerindian peoples will see ‘the beauty of our faith’ and obtain ‘strength’ and ‘charity’.¹⁶⁸

In 1642, Vimont concluded that if they were to be captured, tortured and killed, this was only right since it was Christ’s own suffering that redeemed the ‘Greeks’ and ‘barbarians’ of old.¹⁶⁹ Lalemant argued that the missions that experienced the most suffering were in fact ‘the richest of all’,¹⁷⁰ and he believed that it was through ‘mockeries’ and ‘threats’ that the Christian Church would produce the ‘fruits of the Gospel’.¹⁷¹ He claimed that his deep hope for the conversion of

¹⁶³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 177–78.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 17–18; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 67.

¹⁶⁵ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1635), pp. 124–26.

¹⁶⁶ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 44.

¹⁶⁷ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 14.

¹⁶⁹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 172–73.

¹⁷⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 165.

¹⁷¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 27. Cf. Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), p. 46.

Amerindians made him ‘almost insensible to his pains’ and ‘quite ready to suffer’.¹⁷² He suggested, in fact, that the more the missionaries willingly suffered rejection or persecution, the more they would bear witness to the power of self-sacrificing love for God, making their presence among the Amerindian peoples all the more potent.¹⁷³ Vimont argued that this form of witness inspires more people to embrace the faith than any other means at their disposal.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, holding true to their emersion in the Louis Lallemand School, the authors frequently judged that the presence of suffering amidst their labours was in fact a sign that their ministry was authentically bound to Christ crucified and thereby on the right track.¹⁷⁵

10. The Fruits of Suffering with Christ in the *Relations*

Throughout the *Relations*, the authors express this ‘mystical’ link between their suffering and God’s aid, regularly describing the decision of many missionaries, as well as of some lay Frenchmen and Amerindian Christians, to make personal vows of penance, mortification or self-sacrifice, as means by which the mission was believed to receive different forms of divine support. Though the substance of these vows is rarely ever mentioned, the perceived effects are certainly described. In the necrology of Chabanel, who struggled with the language and living conditions and, generally, to be of any value to mission, Ragueneau writes that he made ‘a vow of perpetual stability’, to become a ‘perpetual servant’ of the people there, hoping that this kind of personal sacrifice to God would make his time among the Amerindians more fruitful.¹⁷⁶ In another case, when missionaries were unsuccessful in gaining the ear of

¹⁷² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 51.

¹⁷³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 3; and Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), pp. 18–19.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Vimont, *Nouvelle-France - Hurons* (1642–1643), pp. 43–44, 81–82, 115, 273–74.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 150–51; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 207–08; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 26–27; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 140–41; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France - Hurons* (1642–1643), pp. 161; and Vimont, *Nouvelle-France - Hurons* (1642–1643), pp. 177–78.

¹⁷⁶ For the full text of Chabanel’s vow, see Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 61–63.

a less than sympathetic Amerindian leader, Le Jeune claimed that his attitude ‘changed in a moment’ because of personal vows and sacrifices that they had offered to God on the man’s behalf.¹⁷⁷

Likewise in his 1636 *Relation*, Brébeuf attests to having made a private vow of sacrifice to St Joseph so that a young woman and her child might survive their illnesses and be baptized.¹⁷⁸ That same year, the veteran missionary promised Mary that he would honour her most especially if she prayed to God for the conversion of three little Amerindian girls whom he had come to know; his hope was reportedly fulfilled.¹⁷⁹ Jérôme Lalemant describes the practice of the Jesuits in fasting the night before a major feast in honour of Mary so that she might help the Amerindians to accept the faith.¹⁸⁰ Le Mercier too describes several offerings of Masses and commitments to additional daily prayers, made in the form of a vow, in order to acquire divine assistance towards the conversion of various Amerindians whom the missionaries encountered while travelling through different villages.¹⁸¹ He also writes of a custom among the brethren to renew a special vow to Mary, ‘the mother of mercy’, every year, praying that the entire land might embrace the Christian faith.¹⁸²

The authors also propose that these private acts of self-sacrifice for God may bring about the healing of various Christians in the mission. In 1637, Brébeuf is said to have described this effect to one of his congregants, explaining that ‘God took great pleasure in the vows that we addressed to him in these or similar necessities’, and that ‘often in France seen and experienced good effects therefrom’.¹⁸³ It is interesting that Brébeuf’s explanation for the ‘vows’ indicates that his understanding of this devotion

¹⁷⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), pp. 26–27.

¹⁷⁸ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 46.

¹⁷⁹ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 46–47.

¹⁸⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 44–45.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 21, 27; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 61.

¹⁸² Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 120. Cf. Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 110–11.

¹⁸³ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 107–08.

came from his formation in France. More importantly, even in the extreme case of illness, the missionary still emphasizes that the result is not certain since ultimately the will of God is supreme.

Nevertheless, Brébeuf and other authors describe various circumstances in which, through personal vows and mortifications, the missionaries did attempt to move the divine will for the sake of their flock. A young Amerindian Christian seriously ill with smallpox epidemic that was spreading throughout the lands was told to make a vow to honour St Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, and Le Jeune claims that he soon after that regained his health.¹⁸⁴ Another Christian, thought already to be ‘a dead man’, is said by Le Jeune to have been miraculously healed after ‘so many prayers’, ‘vows’ and ‘mortifications’ made by the priests around him; he was almost immediately well enough to join a hunt in the hope of feeding his family.¹⁸⁵ An unidentified Jesuit who had been sick for over three months with a debilitating condition committed himself to say a series of prayers to Mary over nine weeks (called a Novena), and by the last day of this obligation he is described as up and about his ministrations.¹⁸⁶ Le Mercier and Jérôme Lalemant, who report the hopes of various missionaries that living out such private vows would save the lives of many Amerindian Christians, also describe this practice.¹⁸⁷

The same belief is expressed through the invocation of vows to God or the saints among the missionaries seeking divine intervention for particular needs in the mission. Unable to secure passage to the Hurons in 1634, Brébeuf promised God to say twenty Masses in his honour and, soon after, he claims he found an Amerindian

¹⁸⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 16–17.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), 11. For other examples, see Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), pp. 45–46; and Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 79–80.

¹⁸⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 279.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 17–18; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 133–34; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 199–200; and Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 150.

who agreed to take him and his supplies downriver.¹⁸⁸ Le Jeune writes that as a ship seemed lost in violent winds, he quickly offered ‘vows to God’ for its safe docking.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, a young Frenchman, tossed into a violent current and unable to swim, is said to have immediately ‘made a vow to fast three Saturdays on bread and water, and to go barefooted on a pilgrimage to *Nostre Dame des Anges*’, to procure his safety; he survived.¹⁹⁰ Again, a member of the French landed gentry fell through the ice one night, and almost drowned, but is said to have ‘made a vow to God’ and thereby found his footing.¹⁹¹ In another instance, Amerindian Christians were told to commit themselves publicly to chaste lives and, the day after they did so, locusts that plagued their crops were said by Le Jeune to have died.¹⁹² When, in 1637, the council of elders and captains governing the Hurons met to discuss whether or not they should banish the missionaries from their lands, he writes that the missionaries all ‘made a vow in this emergency’.¹⁹³ Lalemant records that to end a summer drought in another village, they ‘made a vow to say several Masses’, and he claims that was soon followed by rain.¹⁹⁴ Finally, after the kidnapping of a young Amerindian student of the Jesuits, Le Mercier writes that many benefactors in France were offering vows and fervent prayers for his safe return.¹⁹⁵

On a few occasions, the authors suggest that their suffering acted as a kind of expiation of their past sins. In 1634, while reflecting upon a time of famine when the Amerindians with whom he travelled had no food to offer him, Le Jeune

¹⁸⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), 329–30. Brébeuf made a similar set of vows in 1635 to procure the passage of Antoine Daniel, Cf. Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1635), p. 119.

¹⁸⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 7.

¹⁹⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 189–90.

¹⁹¹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 12–13. Cf. Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 104.

¹⁹² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 17–18.

¹⁹³ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 21.

¹⁹⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 117–18.

¹⁹⁵ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 211.

recontextualizes his circumstances and suggests that this was a gifted time of spiritual benefit:

I can truly say that this time of famine was for me a time of abundance. When I realized that we began to hover between the hope of life and the fear of death, I made up my mind that God had condemned me to die of hunger for my sins [...] I confess that one suffers, and that he must reconcile himself to the Cross; but God glories in helping a soul when it is no longer aided by his creatures.¹⁹⁶

The suffering is here identified as an act of divine will which removes any reliance on other people or material things, thus leaving the person united with the Cross of Christ. This same idea having been conveyed by Brébeuf who, in 1636, lamented the circumstances of the missionaries, and wrote that ‘I believe that my sins, which required that I should suffer these things, fell also upon the others’.¹⁹⁷ Lalemant also expresses this idea when he recorded the sermon of an unnamed missionary, who told the Amerindians not to despair, since ‘I too suffer willingly for my offences [...] hoping that God will show me mercy’.¹⁹⁸

The authors did however distinguish between the unpreventable suffering they experienced in *Nouvelle-France* and that which they intentionally inflicted upon themselves for the benefit of the mission as a kind of living martyrdom.¹⁹⁹ They understood that by choosing to enter *Nouvelle-France*, they were consciously embracing a life of suffering for their own salvation and for the salvation of the Amerindian peoples. They believed that this suffering would unite more closely with Jesus Christ both themselves and, ultimately, those whom they evangelized successfully. It was, in this sense, a divine gift that, if embraced, would provide astounding effects. This belief shaped the authors’ understanding of why they were there, and it clearly constituted a principal aspect of how they imagined their role in

¹⁹⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 198.

¹⁹⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 29.

¹⁹⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 167.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 189; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 28, 32; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 104–05; and Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 5.

the New World. This becomes all the more evident when one reads the authors' references to martyrdom and its place in the mission, even before any one of them actually experienced it. Indeed, as we shall see, the martyrdom of a missionary was highly valued as the best means to transform the Amerindian peoples into a Christian civilization.

11. The Missionaries' Total Self-Offering to God in the *Relations*

The authors remind the reader consistently of the real threat of death that many missionaries faced. As the introduction to this study explains, this threat was often most acute in the lands of the Hurons, partly because of the war with the Iroquois that their people shared with the French, and partly because many Hurons associated the missionaries with the disease that ravaged their lands. In 1638, Le Jeune reported ominously that, in the nation of the Hurons, 'We expected nothing but a general massacre of our Fathers and our French people'.²⁰⁰ Two years later he tells the reader that the Jesuits working there, amidst the enmity of some Hurons and the constant threat of Iroquois attack, were 'combating daily against death'.²⁰¹ The Amerindians were frustrated with the calamities they had faced since the arrival of the French and irritated that the priests discouraged their use of traditional spiritual practices to heal themselves; Le Mercier writes that 'there are threats of nothing less than blows with the hatchet, and every kind of murder'.²⁰² Despite their efforts to be a supportive presence among the Hurons, Lalemant stated that they were 'recompensed only with ingratitude, threats, and blows'.²⁰³ They were deprived of food in the hope that they would abandon the mission out of hunger.²⁰⁴ On one occasion, their cabin was set on

²⁰⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 60.

²⁰¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 144.

²⁰² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 105–06.

²⁰³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 88.

²⁰⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 170.

fire.²⁰⁵ One missionary was stabbed for preaching, another had hot coals from a fire thrown into his cassock for hearing the confession of a sick person.²⁰⁶ Even seeing a Jesuit entering a house provoked one captain to brandish his hatchet and threaten to break open Le Mercier's head.²⁰⁷ In 1640, Lalemant concluded that most of the Hurons 'desired our death as passionately as they craved the preservation of their own lives', and that they spoke of nothing else but of 'slaughtering us'.²⁰⁸

Yet, despite these threats and the general dangers of the mission, the authors of the *Relations* often report that they, and the other Jesuits and Christian Amerindians, were not afraid to die. In 1634, Le Jeune articulates this belief in the form of a prayer:

O Jesus, son of the all-powerful, who have taken human flesh for us, who was born of a Virgin for us, who have died for us, who was resurrected and ascended into heaven for us [...] My Lord, graciously hear my prayer. I offer you my life for these people, very happy to die that they may live and acknowledge you.²⁰⁹

In this prayer, we find three important ideas that shaped the missionaries' religious understanding of suffering: first, that Jesus Christ died for every human person; second, his own willingness to die; and third, that his death could be 'for these people'.

It is certainly possible for the reader of the *Relations* to see the authors' willingness to die as a near-fanatical disposition. Perhaps, as Guy Laflèche argues, the Jesuits concluded that, amidst war, disease and lack of success, dying in the missions was the best form of propaganda available to them.²¹⁰ But in his 1640–1641 *Relation*, Le Jeune defines the parameters for offering oneself to God by suffering death at the hand of Amerindians. Illustrating the advice he gave to all lay Christians of the

²⁰⁵ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 24.

²⁰⁶ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 136–37.

²⁰⁷ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 8.

²⁰⁸ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 189.

²⁰⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 275.

²¹⁰ Guy Laflèche, *Les Saints martyrs canadiens: histoire du mythe* (Québec, 1988), pp. 9–24.

mission, he wrote that ‘If they [the Amerindians] wish to murder anyone for his belief’, he should not defend himself against them, but rather ‘suffer death for Jesus Christ’. If, however, anyone tries to kill him out of ‘enmity’ or ‘envy’, then he must defend himself ‘courageously’.²¹¹

A clear distinction was thus made between accepting death in a situation where one understands the attack to be aimed against God or the Christian faith, and doing so when attacked for other reasons. These other reasons probably relate primarily to the wars underway between the Iroquois and the French, as well as to skirmishes along the routes between Québec and the mission to the Hurons, where supplies were often stolen by force. The authors regularly articulated this general willingness to die under the first set of conditions and, as we shall see, they believed that any martyrdom is an act of self-sacrificing love for God that naturally proceeds from the general practices of self-sacrifice that we have already seen to be present throughout the narratives.

In his 1639 *Relation*, Jérôme Lalemant mused on the idea of martyrdom, and told his readers:

We have sometimes wondered whether we could hope for the conversion of this country without the shedding of blood. The principle received, it seems, in the Church of God, that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians [...] Considering the glory that redounds to God from the constancy of the martyrs, with whose blood all the rest of the earth has been so lately drenched, it would be a sort of curse if this quarter of the world should not participate in the happiness of having contributed to the splendour of this glory.²¹²

His reflections here speak to a fundamental principle held by the missionaries that, just as sacrifices, vows and mortifications were thought to bring spiritual gifts to the mission, the actual ‘shedding of blood’ was, as Tertullian had expressed it over a thousand years before, the ‘seed’ of Christians: the principal means of the faith.

²¹¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 30–31.

²¹² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 27–28.

Furthermore, Lalemant reinforced his logic by suggesting that more recent ‘martyrs’, probably those among the Jesuit mission to England and Japan, as well as those caught in the violence of the Reformation in Europe, have shown this to be true. To suffer the same fate was a ‘happiness’ that should not be withheld from *Nouvelle-France*.

In the following year, Jérôme Lalemant argued that, perhaps, ‘Our blood would do more for the conversion of these peoples than all our sweat’.²¹³ Le Jeune had earlier written that ‘I can hardly persuade myself that these tribes will enter the Church without a sacrifice; I mean without putting to death some of those who shall instruct them’.²¹⁴ He goes on to argue that the Devil will not give up his hold over the lands without a fight, and suggests that the self-sacrifice of the missionaries is their response to this, while Vimont suggests that conversions will ultimately come at ‘the price of our blood and our lives’.²¹⁵

One of the most striking examples of this belief is found in Ragueneau’s necrology of Brébeuf, in which the author includes a journal passage documenting a vow of martyrdom pronounced by the veteran missionary during one of his annual retreats in *Nouvelle-France*. That vow is seen to reflect Brébeuf’s deep desire to die for Jesus Christ as an offering that might unite him all the more with God and inspire faith.²¹⁶ Before the Blessed Sacrament, he proclaimed to God:

I make a vow to you never to fail, on my side, in the grace of martyrdom [...] I offer to you [Jesus Christ] from today, in the feelings of joy that I have, my blood, my body, and my life, so that I may die only for you, if you grant me this grace, since you have indeed condescended to die for me.²¹⁷

²¹³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 180.

²¹⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 132–33.

²¹⁵ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France - Hurons* (1642–1643), p. 269.

²¹⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 64.

²¹⁷ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 65.

Later in the same text, Ragueneau explains a principal reason for this vow: ‘It was in the ardour of this zeal that he offered himself very often to God, to suffer all the martyrdoms of the world, for the conversion of these peoples’.²¹⁸ Here again, the Jesuit suggests that to die embracing Christ in martyrdom is a loving response to, and emulation of, Christ’s death on the Cross for him. This kind of death is ultimately a favour or gift granted by God, and dying in such a way will reap benefits both for his own soul and for the souls of the Amerindian peoples.

All these aspects of the authors’ presentation of self-sacrificing love for God come together in a letter included by Le Mercier in his 1637–1638 *Relation*. Believing that they faced imminent death at the hands of the Huron, Brébeuf, Le Mercier, Pierre Chastellain, Garnier and Ragueneau prepared a final testament.²¹⁹ In this letter, sent to their superior in Québec, the authors acknowledged that they came to *Nouvelle-France* to aid Christ in ‘bearing his cross’ for the sake of the Amerindian peoples. They believed that their deaths would be the ‘crown’ of their labours, and wrote that ‘it is for him that we desire to live and to die’, and thus that they would be ‘shedding their blood’ and ‘sacrificing’ their lives ‘to the service of our good master, Jesus Christ’. The authors understood that God, in his ‘goodness’, had ‘consented’ to their deaths, and even believed that death might serve them too, in that it would ‘expiate’ their ‘great and innumerable sins’. They vowed to endure any torture or suffering ‘with patience in his service’. Amidst their efforts to evangelize, it is in this opportunity to be united to Jesus Christ in a loving self-offering that the men considered themselves ‘truly to belong to his Society [the Society of Jesus]’.

²¹⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 81.

²¹⁹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), pp. 28–30.

12. Conclusion

The ‘land of the cross’ described in the *Relations* represents a complex set of beliefs about the role of sacrifice and self-offering, firmly rooted in the authors’ own religious experience. Volunteering to join the mission to *Nouvelle-France*, making the journey there, living among the Amerindian peoples, and the process of evangelization are all understood to create a context or space in which one can, as Lallemand suggests, live out a ‘second conversion’. In this mystical space, the authors believe that they can offer themselves all the more completely to the suffering Christ, and that their loving embrace of Jesus Christ through countless adversities in *Nouvelle-France* helps both themselves and the Amerindian people to grow in sanctity. Formed in a spiritual practice that treated any form of suffering as an opportunity to love God and inspired by the early Christian martyrs, they saw themselves as apostles to a New World where their greatest tool was their own self-annihilation.

At the centre of this religious worldview is the authors’ mystical experience of Jesus Christ himself, the true focus, as de Sales suggests, of human love and devotion. The person of Jesus, according to Loyola and Bérulle, is the model of human life, so that by embracing him in love, individuals become more like him. The authors place a particular emphasis on the suffering Christ who ‘died for our sins’ (1 Corinthians 15:3). They see this action as a divine attitude or disposition that brings together love, suffering, self-sacrifice and healing. Furthermore, they believe that in a sincere Christian life, this disposition must be emulated. Just as God offered the opportunity for his Son to embrace a life of suffering and death for the sake of the world, it is God — Le Jeune’s ‘author of all afflictions’ — who offers the missionaries their various trials for the sake of the people they have come to serve. The difficult travel

conditions, scarcity of food and lack of hygiene are all gifts from God. Likewise, the authors' inability to live out their religious life as they would in France, the calumny of some Amerindians, the disease that plagued the lands, the constant threat of misunderstanding or violence, and even the threat of death itself, are understood to be somehow part of divine providence. For it is believed that Christ's actions on earth, by suffering, dying a violent death, and rising from the dead, cannot be separated from the ongoing labours of his ministers. Thus, in the *Relations*, the apparently paradoxical links between self-annihilation and human fulfilment, suffering and healing, dying and rising, are believed to be divine qualities that must be lived out by the Jesuits so that their evangelical project might bear fruit.

The authors' response to these afflictions seems always to echo the question they would ask themselves while praying with the *Exercises*: 'what ought I to do and suffer for him [Jesus Christ]?'²²⁰ The Jesuits in the *Relations* are presented as men who desire to live in the imitation of Christ, because they claim to love him and want, in life, to be as close to him as possible. Their character as 'missionary' in the narrative is thus filled with the holy ambition to find that intimacy by lovingly sharing the suffering of Jesus Christ. As we have seen, this is illustrated both in their private devotions and in their public actions.

The missionaries embraced discomforts, trials, violence and even death in the mission. They took private vows, obliging themselves to particular mortifications or religious obligations. Suffering was thought to be an important bridge between God and humanity, intensifying their union with their Creator, expiating past sins and bringing greater sanctity into their lives. More than this, the men believed that this suffering would also help to transform the lives of the Amerindians. Like the early

²²⁰ SE [197].

Christians, and in continuity with the religious worldview found in the writings of Loyola, Lallemand and *l'École Française*, the authors continuously suggested that the act of lovingly embracing the gift of annihilation, mortification or self-sacrifice for God was ultimately rewarded with more gifts — edification, healing and conversions. For, as we saw earlier, Le Jeune reminded his readership that no one ‘can enter the Church without sacrifice’. In the right circumstances, the fruits of the missionaries’ labours among the Amerindian peoples would ultimately come from martyrdom, the *telos* of their chosen trajectory towards Christ on the Cross. The suffering, self-sacrifice and death found in the history of the early Church under the Roman Empire were thought to be required again in *Nouvelle-France* to build up the faith, just as they were required in Europe to purify it from heresy. Joining Christ on the Cross, in the land of crosses, was seen as a privileged gift and the most solid bedrock on which the faith could be built.

The suffering God and the suffering missionary, each willing to die for the sake of the other and for the sake of the Amerindian people, form the ‘sacred space’ in which the authors of the *Relations* describe their evangelical labours and all their experiences in the New World. These two characters within the narrative speak to each other through a drama in which the ‘divine’ who suffered offers suffering to the ‘missionary’, and the ‘missionary’ lovingly accepts it. This interaction between the ‘divine’ and the ‘missionary’ forms the content and expression of the rhetoric of martyrdom found throughout the texts. Rhetoric not limited to the act of martyrdom itself, but rather one that permeates all of its pages, and expresses the authors’ profound belief that they labour in a ‘land of the cross’.

CHAPTER THREE

‘Le royaume de Sathan’: The Devil and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom in the *Relations*

1. Introduction

It would have been a wonder indeed, if the powers of hell had not crossed the affairs of God. The devil must defend his kingdom that he has possessed throughout time, and it is not without resistance that he is to be expelled from it.¹

As this quotation from Jérôme Lalemant indicates, the Jesuits believed both that God had ordained their evangelical project in *Nouvelle-France* and that the Devil would do everything in his power to defend his long-standing hold over the territory. Throughout the *Relations*, Le Jeune, Le Mercier, Lalemant and Vimont refer at different times to the ‘Empire of Satan’ or the ‘Kingdom of Satan’, or as the ‘dominion’ where the Devil rules over the Amerindian peoples, who are unaware of their servitude.² This kind of rhetoric, found throughout the narrative, has been acknowledged by a number of leading historians, who rightly conclude that the religious worldview of the authors contributed to how they understood Amerindian culture.³ What these scholars have not done, however, is examine in greater depth how this worldview was influenced by the authors’ own religious experience of the Devil, and how this experience contributed to the ways in which they described all their adventures in the ‘New World’.

¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 152.

² Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 40–41; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 32–33, 100–01; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 54; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 140–41; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), pp. 2, 4; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 140–41; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 2; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 113; Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1645–1646), p. 48.

³ Cf. Trigger, *The Children of Aataensic*, p. 503; W. Eccles, *France in America* (Markham, 1990), p. 45; Anderson, *Chain Her by One Foot*, p. 29; J. B. Callicot, ‘Traditional Amerindian Indian and Western European Attitudes toward Nature: An Overview’, in *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*, ed. by M. Oelschlaeger (Albany, 1995), pp. 193–219; Abé, *The Jesuit Mission to New France*, p. 73.

As we have already seen, the authors' journey to *Nouvelle-France* was primarily described throughout the *Relations* as a journey with Jesus Christ into a new land where, through the prayer, hard work and the suffering of the missionaries with Christ, the Amerindian peoples might be inspired to embrace the Christian faith. It was seen as a mission that involved great personal sacrifice for God and, through that sacrifice, promised enormous spiritual benefit for all involved. In this chapter, I shall show how this belief places *Nouvelle-France* on to a spiritual plane including space for the activity of the 'divine' and the 'missionary', but also for the evil exploits of the Devil. In this way, the authors' awareness that the Amerindians knew nothing of Christianity went hand in hand with their belief that this fact would make the Devil all the more present to destroy these peoples.

For this reason, and not long after their arrival, some authors — such as Brébeuf — began to suggest that Amerindians were unknowingly worshipping the Devil in their ritual feasts, their faith in dreams and in the spells of their 'sorcerers'.⁴ The missionaries concluded that the Devil was providing the supernatural abilities that reinforced the Amerindians' rituals, creating a false belief system that left them under his domination.⁵ They found in these rituals a core desire on the part of the practitioners to acquire material possessions, as well as signs of gluttony, licentiousness and, in some cases, cruel violence that, according to the authors' understanding of evil, only confirmed their demonic origins. More than this, the authors observed in the Amerindian cultures the worship of objects, animals and nature, and believed this to be in direct opposition to God's desire for persons, while

⁴ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 15.

⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 155; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 120–1, 129–30; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 107–8, 123–4, 138–9; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 8; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 70–71, 144–45; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 88, 119–20; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 17; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 26, 37–38, Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), pp. 22–23.

at the same time recognizing in this behaviour a typical ploy of the Devil to entrap human beings in their disordered attachments.⁶

The authors thus understood that their presence in *Nouvelle-France* and their efforts to evangelize the Amerindian peoples placed them in direct confrontation with the Devil and his demons. Le Jeune suggested that the Devil was ‘on the defensive’ for fear of losing his grasp on the lands.⁷ Brébeuf concluded that the ongoing conflict between the Hurons and the Iroquois was one of Satan’s ‘stratagems’ to prevent conversion.⁸ And Vimont wrote that the ‘powers of darkness’ had openly declared war against the missionaries.⁹ As we shall see, this response of the authors again reflects their own religious experience. Heirs of the Tridentine Church and contemporaries of the French wars of religion, these men came from a cultural milieu in which the Devil was understood to be the instigator of all false religions and heresy. This was all the more evident since the authors had lived in France during a proverbial ‘golden age of the devil’, when demonic possessions and public exorcisms dominated the religious scene; not the least of which was the well-known possession of Jean Joseph Surin (1600–1665), one of their own contemporaries in the order. Most importantly, however, there is the authors’ experience of the *Exercices*, and their formation in Louis Lallemant’s school of spirituality that, as we have already seen, profoundly animated their entire worldview.

Subsequently, a large number of the tribulations chronicled by the authors were attributed to the Devil, whom they declared to be their primary adversary. Slander regarding the effects of baptism, the origin of the deadly disease plaguing the land, and setbacks to the overall objective of the missionaries were often attributed to

⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 196–97.

⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 1–2.

⁸ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 51–53.

⁹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 256.

Satan. The Jesuits and their Christian followers were said to have been attacked by the Devil through dreams, visions, people possessed by demons and frightening night visits from mysterious spectres who are sometimes identified as Satan himself. These attacks were seen as a continuous infliction upon the missionaries that corresponded to their belief that to be in *Nouvelle-France* at the service of God necessarily involved suffering. The purported supernatural origins of this suffering, in the form of the Devil, thus elevated these events and gave them spiritual meaning, as elements in a cosmic battle between God and the Devil in which the missionaries' own suffering played a part. The slander, failures, mockery and violence that they experienced and describe in the *Relations*, therefore became for the authors a rhetorical device that identified their place within this battle.

In the first part of this chapter, I shall introduce the reader to the origins of the Devil in the Christian imagination in section two, and then, in section three, I shall show how this imagination developed throughout the medieval period. In section four, I shall move on to a brief examination of the presence of the Devil in the early modern period, with a particular emphasis on how, in light of socio-political and religious circumstances, the early seventeenth-century French Church understood demonic phenomena. In section five I shall examine specifically the ways in which the *Exercices* shaped our authors' understanding of Satan, while in section six, I shall look at how that understanding was formed by the Louis Lallemant school of spirituality. Finally, in section seven, it shall be seen how the work of the Jesuit missionary José de Acosta may have influenced our authors' understanding of the Devil in the New World. Applying these different contexts to the *Relations* in the second half of this chapter, I shall clarify in section eight an important academic debate as to whether the authors did indeed identify the presence of the Devil in

Nouvelle-France, and in section nine I shall illustrate how ‘the prince of lies’ was believed to hold dominion over the Amerindian peoples by masquerading as their true divinity. Then, in section ten, I shall illustrate the various ways in which he ensured that dominion through their traditions. In section eleven, I shall identify how the Devil, considered as a real and present danger, was said to be attacking the missionaries. And, finally, in section twelve, we shall see how this aspect of the authors’ religious worldview is manifested in the rhetoric of martyrdom; I shall then suggest some conclusions that will help us to look ahead to our chapter on the martyrdom accounts.

2. The Devil in the Early Christian Church

Since the early foundations of the Christian tradition, the Devil has been considered to be the supreme evil spirit.¹⁰ Throughout the New Testament, he is given many names, including ‘Satan’, ‘the evil one’, ‘the accuser’, ‘the tempter’, ‘the ancient serpent’, the ‘ruler of this world’, the ‘god of this world’ and the ‘enemy’, all of which have continued to inform Western understanding of the subject.¹¹ Throughout the Scriptures, the Devil is presented as an ancient foe of God, who hates human persons since God loves them so much, and who continuously attempts to draw them away from their Creator through temptation, deception and sometimes possession of their bodies. In the New Testament, it is Satan who tempts Jesus Christ to stray from his divine mission to free human persons from sin. It is this same evil one who convinces an apostle of Christ, Judas Iscariot, to betray him to the Jewish authorities (John 13:2–

¹⁰*Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Adrian van den Born, 2nd edn (New York, 1963), pp. 564–65.

¹¹ Cf. ‘Satan’: Matthew 4:10, 12:26, 16:23; Mark 1:13, 3:23, 4:15, 8:23; Luke 10:18, 11:18, 13:16, 22:3, 22:31; John 13:27; Acts 5:3, 26:18; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5, 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:14, 12:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; the ‘Evil One’: Matthew 13:19, 38; John 17:15; Ephesians 6:16 etc.; the ‘Accuser’: Revelation 12:10; the ‘Tempter’: Matthew 4:3; the ‘Ancient Serpent’: Revelation 12:9; the ‘ruler of this world’: John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; the ‘god of this world’: 2 Corinthians 4:4; the ‘enemy’: Matthew 13:39.

27). And it is the Devil, or his demons, whom Jesus Christ is said to exorcise from many who are suffering from demonic possession. Ultimately, the Devil is believed to be a liar and the murderer of humanity (John 8:39–44), whom Jesus Christ defeated through his loving self-sacrifice on the Cross.

In the early centuries of the Church, the Christian understanding of the Devil developed alongside the precarious circumstances of the Christian community. Anathematized by their Jewish brothers and sisters, and systematically persecuted by their Roman overlords, Christians saw a sharp spiritual dichotomy between the world ruled by the Devil, under Roman occupation (Revelation 13), and the Kingdom of Christ to come at the end of time (2 Thessalonians 2:1–12). Some of the earliest bishops of the Christian Church expounded upon these ideas in their ongoing correspondence with Christians throughout the empire. Clement I, Bishop of Rome (d. 99), suggested that conflict and sin among Christians arose from the promptings of the ‘adversary’.¹² In his letter to the Ephesian community, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (d. 107), warned his readers to be wary of the Devil’s use of the cruel torture and death imposed on so many Christians by the Roman authorities to draw them away from their own faith in Jesus Christ.¹³ Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (d. 156) warned that it was Satan, seeking to encourage apostasy, who instigated the efforts of the Romans to intensify the torture inflicted upon Christians.¹⁴ And the second-century literary work, *Shepherd of Hermas*, suggests that there is an ‘angel of iniquity’ who can be invited into the human heart, and who induces anger, drunken revels,

¹² F. X. Gokey, *The Terminology of the Devil and Evil Spirits in the Apostolic Fathers* (Washington, 1961), pp. 68–69.

¹³ Virginia Corwin, *Saint Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* (New Haven, 1960), pp. 7–10.

¹⁴ *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, trans. by Michael Holmes (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 78–81 (Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chapters 7, 8 and 9).

impropriety, a desire for riches and luxury, a hankering for sexual intercourse and pride.¹⁵

3. The Devil in Medieval Catholic Thought

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, took up these themes from Scripture and developed an understanding of the Devil and the ‘problem of evil’ that remains the foundation of mainstream Christian teaching on the subject.¹⁶ He proposed that the Devil and his followers were angels who had disobeyed God and, no longer able to do any good act, had fallen from grace and were now bent on destroying the souls of persons whom God hopes will enter heaven.¹⁷ When the angel Lucifer fell he became the Devil, and when other angels fell they became demons at his service.¹⁸ Augustine argued that, out of respect for the freedom of each person to choose between good and evil, God permits the Devil to treat the world as his proverbial playground, tempting human persons to reject their Creator and to turn in upon their own passions.¹⁹ The Devil is thought to manipulate the good of the world towards his evil ends, making it possible for each person to choose to do wrong, in the hope that everyone might be so twisted away from goodness that they will abandon their relationship with God.²⁰ Evil is therefore considered by Augustine to be an absence, with no real substance and with no ontological existence, since the Devil can only manipulate the good things that God has created; in and of himself he has no power to create, only to incite human

¹⁵ The Apostolic Fathers: Comprising the Epistles (Genuine and Spurious) of Clement of Rome, the Epistles of S. Ignatius, the Epistle of S. Polycarp, the Martyrdom of S. Polyarp, the Teaching of the Apostles, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, trans. by J. R. Harmer, et al (London, 1891), p. 97. (Book of Mendates, chapter 6, book 2.).

¹⁶ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (ithaca; London, 1981), p. 195.

¹⁷ Augustine, *City of God*, trans. by Henry Bettenson (London, 1984), 12:1.

¹⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, 11:33; Augustine, *Against Maximus the Arian*, trans. by Richard Stothert (Edinburgh, 1872), 2:12.

¹⁹ Cf. Augustine, *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. by Peter King (Cambridge, 2010), p. xx; Frederick Van Fleteren, ‘Devil’, in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia*, ed. by D. Fitzgerald (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 268–69; Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1967), p. 245.

²⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by Tobie Matthew (London, 1954), books 7, 12 and 18.

agents to destroy what is good.²¹ That being said, Augustine believed that a person's ability to choose God over the Devil's temptations is damaged by the original sin of Adam and Eve; God can only aid individuals through the outpouring of his grace.²² The long-term effect of this proposition can be seen in the first canon of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which suggests that the Devil is in fact the mastermind behind the original sin in the Garden of Eden: '[Man] sinned at the instigation of the devil'.²³

By the thirteenth century, many Christians saw Satan and his demons as a part of everyday life; the labours of these fallen angels were identified as the root cause of every natural evil and the source of every personal temptation that stirred in the human heart.²⁴ The writings of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and Duns Scotus (1266–1308) developed the Church's reflection on this subject further. Aquinas argued that, being prideful, Satan longed for independence from God, while Scotus emphasized the narcissistic self-love of the fallen angel in desiring to stand alone, identifying this desire as a form of *luxuria*, or lust, for power, among other things, that brought him to betray his relationship with God.²⁵ The spirit of self-centredness, at the core of the Devil's fall and his weapon against every human person, was thought to manifest itself in the seven deadly sins of lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride, which were central to the medieval Church's teaching on sin and evil in the human person.²⁶

²¹ Augustine, *City of God*, 11:22, and 12:3.

²² Augustine, *Against Julian*, trans. by Matthew A. Schumacher (Washington, 1981), pp. 285–87.

²³ 'Fourth Lateran Council', in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Norman Tanner, 2 vols (Washington, 1990), I, 230.

²⁴ Cf. Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Inquiry Inspired by the Great Witch Hunt* (London, 1975), pp. 73–74; G. S. Williams, 'Demonologies', in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. by B. P. Levack (Oxford, 2013).

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. by Thomas Gilby (New York, 1969), 1a, 63.2–3; Duns Scotus, *On the Will and Morality*, trans. by Allan B. Wolter (Washington, 1986), p. 100.

²⁶ The idea of the 'Seven Deadly Sins' originates in the writings of fourth-century monk Evagrius Ponticus, who identified eight evil thoughts that form the roots of all sin, namely gluttony, fornication,

Greatly influenced by the writings of Aquinas (and Aristotle) on both the cosmology of creation and general aspects of theodicy, the Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) produced his epic work entitled *Divina commedia* between 1308 and 1321.²⁷ One of the greatest works of literature ever written, it describes hell, purgatory and heaven, and its portrayal of the Devil cannot be ignored as a legitimate source for understanding the medieval imagination on the subject.²⁸ As an allegorical testimony to the human soul's journey towards God, the first canticle explores a series of ten circles that form hell. The author describes Lucifer as the 'emperor' of hell.²⁹ Having been the 'fairest and noblest of created things', he is said to have been cast out of heaven by Michael the archangel for having committed the sin of pride against God.³⁰ He is called the 'Father of lies', and the 'origin of all woes'.³¹ Sitting at the centre of hell, he is portrayed not in glorious flame, but as a giant demon trapped in a frozen wasteland, macabre, grotesque and speechless. His three mouths gnaw on the greatest traitors known to Western Christendom: Judas Iscariot, Brutus and Cassius.³² He is a brooding character, with his mind fixed on instigating humanity's betrayal of God, no doubt wishing on them his own fate of dwelling away from the light, in total isolation from the Creator.

avarice, hubris, sadness, wrath, boasting and dejection. Cf. Julia Konstantinovskiy, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Making of a Gnostic* (Farnham, 2009). These were translated and integrated into the Western theological discourse by John Cassian, and then revised by Pope Gregory I into the seven deadly sins listed in the body of the text above. Cf. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, ed. by Richard J. Payne (New York, 1982), p. 83.

²⁷ Cf. Lorenzo-Paluello, 'Dante's Reading Of Aristotle', in *The World of Dante*, ed. by Cecil Grayson (Oxford, 1980), pp. 61–80; Christian Moevs, *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (Oxford; New York, 2005).

²⁸ Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York; London, 1994); John Julius Norwich, *The Italians: History, Art, and the Genius of People* (London, 1983), p. 27; Robert Reinhold Ergang, *The Renaissance* (Princeton, 1967), p. 103.

²⁹ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Hell*, trans. by Dorothy L. Sayers (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 28 (book XXXIV); henceforth cited as: *The Divine Comedy (Hell)*.

³⁰ *The Divine Comedy (Hell)*, 143–44 (book XIII).

³¹ *The Divine Comedy (Hell)*, 143–44 (book XIII); and 18 (book VII).

³² *The Divine Comedy (Hell)*, 61–9 (book XXIII).

Kempis' *Imitatio*, as we have already seen, was of great influence on the authors of the *Relations*. It describes a spiritual war of temptation between the Devil and every human person.³³ The Devil is again portrayed as a liar and a deceiver, who wants to keep human persons from receiving Jesus Christ in their lives. Kempis suggests that everyone must defend themselves by faith in God, ascetical practices, courage, patience and unswerving resistance.³⁴ According to the Carthusian mystic Dionysius van Leeuwen (1402–1471), the labours of the Devil and his demons are unceasing. In his theological perspective, with free will always remaining intact, demons do have the ability to interfere directly in the lives of human persons, and a demon is ascribed to every person, always attempting to sway him or her away from God.³⁵

By the fifteenth century, the common belief in the Devil and his activities in human affairs continued. Not only were many troubled about the Devil's ongoing manipulation of souls, but they became bent upon identifying and neutralizing anyone who willingly sought to evoke demonic power through witchcraft. In a bull of 1484 entitled *Summis desiderantes affectibus* (Desiring with Extreme Ardour), for example, Pope Innocent VIII reveals a more universal appropriation of the role of the Devil in the mind of the fifteenth-century Church.³⁶ He reiterates that the Devil is referred to as the 'enemy of mankind', and a friend to heretics who are thought to murder babies, kill livestock, prevent conjugal union, make incantations, use charms and conjure demons.³⁷ Subsequently, the Dominican friar Jacob Sprenger, who had petitioned

³³ *Imitatio*, x, 1.

³⁴ *Imitatio*, pp. 26, 37, 100.

³⁵ Dictionnaire de spiritualité, I, pp. 227–28.

³⁶ On the circumstances of this bull, cf. Eric Wilson, 'Institoris at Innsbruck: Heinrich Institoris, the *Summis desiderantes* and the Brixen Witch-Trial of 1485', in *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe 1400–1800*, ed. by Bob Scribner and Trevor Johnson (New York, 1996).

³⁷ *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: A Documentary History*, ed. by Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 177–80.

Innocent to promulgate the bull, wrote the *Malleus maleficarum*, presenting a revised theological argument for the active presence of the Devil in the world, illustrating how witches made use of this presence and outlining how they were to be treated.³⁸

4. The Devil in Early Modern Catholic Thought

With the coming of the Protestant Reformation, Satan's efforts were thought by many Catholics to have gained considerable ground. The three decrees from the Council of Trent that directly address the evil activity of the Devil refer specifically to Protestant theological views, considering them to be a direct demonic attack against the Church of God and therefore anathema. In its *Decreta de symbolo fidei* (Decree on the Symbols of Faith), the Council asserted that heresies do not come from 'flesh and blood' but 'from spirits of wickedness in the high places' (Ephesians 6:12), suggesting that the Devil's manipulation were at work in the minds of Protestant reformers.³⁹ In *Decretum de peccato originali* (Decree on Original Sin), the Devil or 'old serpent' is blamed for 'stirring up' both old and new heresies in the Church.⁴⁰ Finally, *De extrema unctione* (On Extreme Unction) suggests that 'Our adversary [the devil] seeks and seizes opportunities, all our life long, to be able in any way to devour our souls'.⁴¹ These decrees reveal the Church's ongoing concern about Satan, devil worship, sorcery, and witchcraft.⁴² Furthermore, natural or intellectual magic, which sought to understand the perfect unity of stars, planets, nature and people, was increasingly denounced as Devilish sorcery.⁴³ And, despite an increasingly humanistic worldview among Catholic scholars including the redoubtable Erasmus, the Devil

³⁸ *Witchcraft in Europe*, ed. by Kors and Peters, p. 180; Peter Hans Broedel, *Malleus maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 22, 30, 34. For the latest translation of this text see *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus maleficarum*, trans. by C. Mackay (Cambridge, 2009).

³⁹ 'Council of Trent', in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Tanner, II, 662.

⁴⁰ 'Council of Trent', in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Tanner, II, 665–66.

⁴¹ 'Council of Trent', in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Tanner, II, 710.

⁴² Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (London, 1994), p. 21.

⁴³ Jean Bodin, *De La démonomanie des sorciers*, 3rd edn (Paris, 1596), p. 7.

remained an important character in the religious imagination of lay and ecclesiastical members of the Christian faith.⁴⁴ Indeed, it would seem that Satan had grown in popular understanding, and was considered by many to be the source of disasters, the instigator of heretical teachings, the source of the violent split between Catholics and Protestants and the overseer of a concerted effort among witches around Europe to destroy the Catholic faith.⁴⁵

As in the rest of Europe at the time, an interesting connection can be made between the political tensions of early modern France and the rapidly growing interest in the demonic. The so-called wars of religion had, throughout the sixteenth century, deeply divided the French kingdom, as Catholics and Huguenots (Calvinists) battled for religious and political superiority. This socio-religious turmoil, followed by an uneasy peace was, in the words of Sarah Ferber, ‘a time characterised by a seemingly universal desire to fix truth, to resolve ambiguity, and to reinforce a sense of authority’.⁴⁶ The clashing swords on the battlefields of France were thus, in a manner of speaking, reimagined in a cosmic battle between the forces of Jesus Christ and those of Satan, and even internalized, as the presence of the Devil in the French imagination took incarnate form in demonic possessions.⁴⁷ During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the possession of (mostly) woman and (sometimes) men by demonic forces, and their exorcism by Catholic clergy, became important

⁴⁴ See: R. Raiswell and P. Dendle (eds.), *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe* (London, 2012), Introduction.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (London, 1986), p. 30.

⁴⁶ Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London, 2004), p. 4.

⁴⁷ The best study available on this phenomenon is *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France*, by Sarah Ferber. Ferber compellingly argues for the enormous cultural importance of demonic possession in early modern France, citing the possessions of Nichole Orbry (pp. 23–39), Marthe Brossier (pp. 40–59), the nuns of Louviers (pp. 89–123), and Marie des Valles and Jeanne des Anges at the convent of Loudun (pp. 124–47). Ferber argues that these women, supposedly under the control of the devil and his demons, became physical manifestations of Satan’s presence in France. As such, they sometimes named the Huguenots as heretical co-conspirators with Satan (p. 28). On other occasions, using the clairvoyance that accompanied their possession, they condemned certain clergy or laity for making secret pacts with demons (p. 70), or they become a type of martyr and preacher, who shared with people the wisdom born from their suffering (pp. 8, 65).

cultural events.⁴⁸ Through possession and exorcism French society could name embodied representations of the presumed evil forces that plagued their lives with division, heresy, death and war and, at the same time, see them overcome by the power of God working through the ‘true’ Catholic religion in the person of the priest or bishop.⁴⁹

An important example of this phenomenon, particularly related to our study of the *Relations*, is the *Traité des énergumènes* (1599), by Bérulle. This provides a spiritual framework to explain the identity of the Devil and his demons, the reasons that demonic possession exists, and the role of exorcism. For the purpose of this study, however, what is most interesting is Bérulle’s specific theory as to the why the Devil attacks human persons. Bérulle points out that, in ancient times, the Stoics had identified certain non-corporeal intelligences over and above our human nature, actively driving or even governing human behaviour, citing the example of the ‘bad angel’ who had provoked Brutus’ to betray Caesar.⁵⁰ He suggests that, in the Christian context, having fallen from heaven, the Devil is

Unable to occupy himself with the God he abandoned, nor able to communicate with the blessed angels from whom he was separated, nor does his deformity allow him to rest and be contented in himself [...] he has no other regard than for our comportment, and his rest is in being a vagabond of the earth, with no other occupation than to act and to converse with [man] who, among all creatures, are the only ones capable of his association.⁵¹

⁴⁸ This fascination with the demonic, and the growing number of demonic possessions in France, led to a series of well-known publications on the subject. See Barthélemy Faye, *Energumenicus* (Paris, 1571); Jean Boulaese, *Le Thresor et entiere histoire de la triomphante victoire du corps de Dieu sur l’esprit maling Beelzebub obtenuë à Laon l’an 1566* (Paris, 1578); Jean Benedicti, *Triomphante victoire de la vierge Marie, sur sept malins esprits, finalement chassésdu corps d’une femme, dans l’Église des Cordeliers de Lyon* (Lyon, 1611); Louis Richeome, *La guerre spirituelle, entre l’âme raisonnable et les trois enemies d’icelle. Le diable, le monde, et la chair* (Troyes, 1627); Pierre Bérulle, *Traite des Energumenes* (Paris, 1631).

⁴⁹ Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil* (London, 1994), p. 183; Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Bérulle, *Traite des energumenes*, p. 9.

⁵¹ The complete text reads: ‘Car cest esprit Angelique estant d’une capacité singuliere continuellement active, et ne pouvant plus s’occuper en Dieu lequel il a abandonné, ny converser avec les Anges bien-heureux des quels il s’est séparé, ny se reposer et contenter en soy mesme à cause de sa difformité, ny mesme se regarder et contempler ainsi deffait et desfiguré comme il est, il n’a plus autre regard que sur

Satan's hatred for God, according to Bérulle, is left forever unsatisfied, since he cannot attack his divine Creator. So, instead, he turns his eyes towards human persons, lovingly made in the divine image, and attacks God through them.⁵² Maliciously active, moved by hatred and envy, working against human persons is his sole occupation, attempting to destroy them in any way that 'the human nature can suffer'.⁵³ Bérulle suggests that, deprived of heaven and having been the cause of original sin in the Garden of Eden, Satan maintains a hold on human persons and on the world they inhabit, making himself 'prince' over it, an 'empire' formed by the sins of humanity.⁵⁴ Bérulle thus sees the Devil as an active force in human affairs, always labouring to destroy human persons. For this reason, he understands the physical presence of the Devil in cases of possession to be a real, albeit extraordinary, effort to disfigure and destroy those made in the image of God.⁵⁵

With an intensely personal touch, the famous case of Jean Joseph Surin and Mother Jeanne des Anges, superior of the Ursuline convent at Loudun, brought the Society of Jesus into the centre of diabolism in seventeenth-century France. It was believed that, in 1632, Jeanne des Anges and twenty-two of her nuns had been possessed by a number of demons at the instigation of a local clergyman, Urbain Grandier (1590-1634), whom the sisters later accused of using demonic pacts to incite their sexual passion for him. Despite Grandier's execution in 1634 on charges of witchcraft, the sisters remained possessed; and at the request of Cardinal Richelieu, Surin was sent to lead a series of exorcisms at Loudun. The extraordinary result of his effort was that, during the ritual, he offered his own body to the demon, in order to

nos deportemens; et son repos est d'être vagabod par la terre, sans autre occupation que d'agir et cōverser avec l'homme, lequel est seul entre toutes les creatures capable de son association', in Bérulle, *Traite des energumenes*, p. 22.

⁵² Bérulle, *Traite des energumenes*, p. 23.

⁵³ The original reads: 'la nature humaine peut souffrir' : Bérulle, *Traite des energumenes*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ Bérulle, *Traite des energumenes*, pp. 25–26.

⁵⁵ Bérulle, *Traite des energumenes*, p. 23.

free Jeanne from her suffering. In a letter to a Jesuit confidant, Achille Doni d'Attichy, written in 1635, he wrote that 'During my ministry, the Devil passed from the body of the possessed person, and entered into mine',⁵⁶ And in the following year, he described the event again, stating that he had asked God to be charged with the suffering of Jeanne des Anges, 'up to being possessed by the demons' inside of her, so that she might be freed of them.⁵⁷ He went on:

We would have never thought that demons could possess a minister of the Church during an exorcism; but as I tormented them in a new way [...] Leviathan, with God's permission, publicly possessed me.⁵⁸

The demonic phenomenon in early modern France thus illustrates not only the belief that the Church had authority over the Devil, who attempted to thwart it through war, heresy, illness and possession, but more specifically that the greatest weapon in that battle was the priest's ability to offer his whole self to God in response to these evils. Subsequently, Surin would endure twenty years of self-imposed isolation, uncontrollable fits, suicidal behaviour and bouts of paralysis, while at the same time continuing to preach and write.⁵⁹ Furthermore, his particular response to the suffering of Jeanne des Anges reflects well his position as a member of the Louis Lallemant 'school of spirituality'. Surin, who had completed his final year of training under Lallemant's direction in 1630, responded to the spiritual crisis four years later with a kind of 'self annihilation', putting both the desire of God and the needs of the

⁵⁶ Jean-Joseph Surin, *Correspondance*, ed. by Michel de Certeau (Paris, 1966), no. 52 (3 May 1635), p. 263. Cf. Moshe Sluhovskiy, 'The Devil in the Convent', *American Historical Review*, 107 (December 2002), 1379–1705 (p. 1380); Moshe Sluhovskiy, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago, 2007).

⁵⁷ 'Un jour, écrit-il, comme je priaï, je ne pus m'empêcher de m'offrir à la divine Majesté pour être chargé du mal de cette religieuse [Jeanne des Anges] et éprouver toutes ses sensations, jusqu'à être possédé du démons, pourvu qu'il plût à sa divine bonté de lui faire la grâce d'entrer solidement dans la pratique de la vertu, ne souhaitant rien avec tant de passion que de délivrer cette âme de la captivité du démon.' Jean Joseph Surin, *Le Triomphe de l'amour divin sur les puissances de l'enfer en la possession de la Mère supérieure des Ursulines de Loudun* (1636) in *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 572.

⁵⁸ 'On n'avait jamais vu que les démons possédassent un ministre de l'Église pendant les exorcismes; mais comme je les tourmentais d'une manière nouvelle [...] Léviathan eut permission de Dieu de me posséder publiquement', Jean Joseph Surin, *Le Triomphe de l'amour divin sur les puissances de l'enfer*, in *Histoire Littéraire*, II, 573.

⁵⁹ Dictionnaire de spiritualité, XIV, 1314–15.

nun before himself.⁶⁰ This religious disposition, and its subsequent response to evil, will be seen later throughout the *Relations*.

When these different phenomena in early modern France — the wars of Religion, the belief that Calvinism was a threat instituted by the Devil, the rise in demonic possessions and the response of men such as Bérulle and Surin — are taken together, they represent part of an extraordinary religious worldview that, as I shall argue, is also present in our authors' work. Plainly put, the Devil is considered to be a real and present danger: the primary cause of the wars in France and of the deaths that followed. He draws in followers who practise the dark arts of witchcraft and sorcery. He possesses people and sometimes even attacked the clergy who tried to exorcise him.

5. The 'Enemy of Man': Satan in the *Spiritual Exercises*

Beyond these wider developments within the Catholic Church's understanding of the Devil, the religious worldview of our authors while composing the *Relations* was particularized through their experience of the *Exercises*. The dramatic language of the *Relations*, which sometimes name *Nouvelle-France* as a 'kingdom' or 'empire' of the Devil and affirm the active presence of the demonic in the land, not only reflects the incarnate forms of the demonic that possessed the contemporary French imagination, but also the section of the *Spiritual Exercises* entitled: 'The Meditation on the Two Standards'. At this point in the text, individuals are invited to imagine a spiritual battleground filled with two opposing forces, namely 'our commander and chief, our Lord, Jesus Christ' and 'Lucifer, the deadly enemy of man'.⁶¹ The former is standing in the regions of Jerusalem, the latter before the gates of Babylon.⁶² Lucifer is described as the deceitful 'bad captain', while Christ is 'sincere' and 'virtuous'.

⁶⁰ Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 360.

⁶¹ *SE* [138].

⁶² *SE* [138].

Smoke and fire surround the Devil's throne, his appearance inspiring 'horror' and 'fear'.⁶³ Loyola then asks the reader to

Consider how he summons innumerable demons, and scatters them, some to one city and some to another, throughout the whole world, so that no province, no place, no state of life, no individual is overlooked.⁶⁴

Lucifer is seen as goading on his demons to trap humans in snares and bind them with chains. Conversely, Christ the King is ruggedly attractive figure,⁶⁵ inviting his apostles and disciples to join him in spreading his message throughout the world.⁶⁶ This passage presents a metaphysical view of the world in which two parallel kingdoms exist, and each person must choose between the way of Jesus Christ and that of Satan. Though it is not presumed that these forces are equal in strength — God will ultimately be victorious — Loyola still presents an image of demons trying to take as many souls as possible for their master. Just as Christ the King sends people throughout the world to evangelize, Lucifer sends his demons to corrupt them. The text thus presents the Devil as active and involved in human affairs, always looking for the best means to ensnare someone in evil, with the remedy being a personal allegiance to, and emulation of, the true king, Jesus Christ.

Beyond this depiction, the Devil is mentioned in two other parts of the *Exercises*. In the 'Rules for Discernment', Loyola suggests two ways in which the 'enemy' or 'evil spirits' can keep the human person in a state of sin and separation from God. First, when persons are locked into a pattern of sinful behaviour, the Devil attempts to keep them in it by proposing sensual pleasures that stimulate the mind in order to keep them lost in their desires.⁶⁷ Second, those who attempt to renounce sinful behaviour and join the service of God are attacked by the evil spirit, harassed

⁶³ *SE* [140].

⁶⁴ *SE* [141].

⁶⁵ *SE* [144].

⁶⁶ *SE* [145].

⁶⁷ *SE* [314].

with anxieties and presented with obstacles that are rooted in false reasoning, all with the hope of preventing them from advancing in their relationship with God.⁶⁸ Here again, the Devil is seen as actively stirring human passions in order to distract the mind from God, and as raising both internal and external obstacles to any human effort at a deeper spiritual conversion of heart.

6. The ‘Prince of Lies’: Louis Lallemant and the Devil

The particular understanding of the Devil in the *Exercises* can be supplemented by analyzing the thoughts of the spiritual master of several of our authors, Louis Lallemant, whose school of spirituality shaped many minds among the French Jesuits of that period. Lallemant proposed that the sanctification of any person necessarily involves removing ‘all resemblance to the devil’ — namely pride, vanity and presumption.⁶⁹ Interestingly for our purposes, he suggests that persons should also avoid ‘all resemblances to brutes’, specifically ‘passions, and the disorderly movements of the sensual appetites’.⁷⁰ Though distinct, these two recommendations are, at their core, congruent, since both involve the renunciation of the human tendency towards selfishness.⁷¹

The possibility of falling into these dispositions is by no means limited to the ‘brute’ since Lallemant suggests that ‘there is no mind so penetrating, no judgment so solid, which the devil cannot deceive’.⁷² As we have already seen, what makes the ‘brute’ or Amerindian so much more susceptible is his lack of knowledge about God — something which the missionaries hoped to remedy. Louis Lallemant points out, as

⁶⁸ *SE* [315].

⁶⁹ *SD*, p. 106.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ A link can be made between Louis Lallemant’s use of the term ‘brute’ and the term ‘*barbare*’ that we find in the *Relations*. As we shall see in chapter four, self-centred behaviour governed by passions is considered by our authors to be ‘less than human’ and contrary to God’s desire for every human person.

⁷² *SD*, p. 120.

did Bérulle, that it is our particular relationship with God as beloved persons, made in his image, which gives us the ability to combat the Devil's efforts. The Devil, he writes, 'has beyond comparison more knowledge than we have'; however, 'we surpass him in this, that we can refer our knowledge to the greater glory of God, which the devil cannot do'.⁷³ The ability to discover the Devil's intentions is said to come from a person's ability, as we saw in the *Exercises*, to discern the movements of good and bad 'spirits' within the self. Reciprocally, ignorance of God and of his working in the human heart is thought to leave a person

Unable to distinguish in themselves the different operations of God, of nature, and of the devil, so that having to choose, as often happens, between two contrary sentiments, they take the false for the true, an idea of their own imagination, or a suggestion of the enemy, for a divine inspiration; their own inclination for an attraction of grace. They freely allow themselves every thing that does not appear to them to be wrong, everything that in their judgment is sanctioned by reason and good sense.⁷⁴

This lack of, as it were, a divine compass is thus said to leave the person with three inadequate forms of wisdom that the Devil is able to manipulate: the *terrena* or 'earthly wisdom', which leaves persons to find their identity in the acquiring of wealth; the *animalis* or sensual wisdom, which leaves them always desiring sensual pleasures; and the *diabolica* or 'devilish wisdom', in which the focus of persons is their own superiority.⁷⁵

Louis Lallemand suggests that true human contentment comes from union with God, but the Devil 'takes advantage of our ignorance and our weakness to plunge us into constant errors and infirmities', so we do not see that the 'sovereign happiness of this life, which consists in seeing God and in enjoying the gift of His holy presence'.⁷⁶ Invoking the Church Father Clement of Alexandria (150–215), he suggests that

⁷³ *SD*, p. 44.

⁷⁴ *SD*, p. 119.

⁷⁵ *SD*, p. 154.

⁷⁶ *SD*, p. 42.

human passions are ‘the devil’s character’. So long as persons are subject to their passions, ‘they are slaves of Satan’, like keys on an organ played to the Devil’s tune. The Devil ‘excites the humours of the body and the phantoms of the imagination’, always hoping to put inner passions and desires into action, so as to keep her or him distracted from God.⁷⁷ The Devil leads us to embrace any object other than God, and particularly hopes that persons will set their hearts on ‘some sweetness or sensible consolation’ that, if he can, the Devil will use to destroy them.⁷⁸ In this state, Louis Lallemand believed, persons in ‘forgetfulness of themselves’ — that is to say, of their true purpose of life in God — will live intoxicated in ‘a whirl of outward things’ and thereby ‘blindly’ follow the machinations of the ‘prince of lies’.⁷⁹

He points out, however, that the working of the Devil in the world, particularly his use of human passions and material things, does not relegate life to a ‘melancholy existence’. Instead, he suggests that those who seek to possess God are filled with ‘happiness’, and that the more we ‘renounce ourselves, in order to unite ourselves to God, the more we cease to be miserable, and the more happy we become’. In this state, he suggests that persons are properly disposed to ‘execute His divine will’ and will thereby discover their true purpose.⁸⁰ This is of course unacceptable to Satan, and here the battle between ‘Christ the King’ and the ‘Enemy of [humanity]’, comes to the fore as Lallemand suggests that the Devil

Interferes with its performance [i.e. humanity’s true purpose], and frustrates it, either by representing difficulties, exciting opposition on the part of others, or creating repugnance in ourselves; or he endeavours to make us give up some part of our undertaking, or to quit altogether our first design, for want of resolution and constancy.⁸¹

The Devil will therefore disturb peace and calm with ‘violence’, ‘trouble’ and

⁷⁷ *SD*, p. 103.

⁷⁸ *SD*, p. 116.

⁷⁹ *SD*, p. 66.

⁸⁰ *SD*, p. 42.

⁸¹ *SD*, p. 204.

anxiety’;⁸² ‘Nothing is more prejudicial in the spiritual life than the fears which the Devil excites by a thousand human respects, which ought to be generously resisted’.⁸³ As we shall see, the Devil’s use of fear is seen by the authors of the *Relations* as directed against any attempt to invite God into Amerindian life, and evidenced by numerous examples.

The ultimate purpose of the Devil’s attack is explained by Lallemand in his suggestion that Satan hopes to rule the world as ‘[G]od’, and therefore makes himself like a god among people. As we have seen, this is a very old idea: as far back in history as the Book of Revelation, an association is made between the ruling Roman civilization and the Devil. Louis Lallemand argues that just as the Devil feigned a divine identity in the idols of the ancients, so he attempts to raise materialism in the hearts of human persons to the level of worship.⁸⁴ Since it was believed that Satan holds sway over persons with regard to the material world, anyone who worships the sun, the sky, trees, food, money, sex, etc. is actually worshipping him. Once persons are caught in this cycle, it is difficult for them to break free without divine assistance, since those drawn into it seek all the more to fill the emptiness it creates.⁸⁵

7. A ‘False Divinity’: Acosta’s Perception of Satan’s Rule Over the Americas

Our authors’ fundamental religious convictions would have been reinforced by Acosta’s observations of the Maya and the Aztecs in Mesoamerica, as well as the Incas of the Andes. As we shall see in chapter four, the missionary presented a generally positive defence of Amerindian personhood, and regularly admonished the heavy-handed methods of the Spanish conquistadors and some of the clergy. At the same time, however, Acosta clearly held to a form of demonology that regarded Satan

⁸² *SD*, pp. 127–28.

⁸³ *SD*, p. 186.

⁸⁴ *SD*, p. 39.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

as the principal instigator, supporter and defender of the traditional worship practised by these indigenous peoples. Jesuit evangelization in Spanish America consequently included a continual effort on the part of the missionaries to make this known, and to introduce Jesus Christ as the correct alternative. This perspective illustrates again how the Jesuit missionaries ultimately viewed their efforts as part of a larger metaphysical project that consisted in a battle for souls captivated in the Devil's deceptions.

According to Acosta, the prominent presence of the Devil in the Americas is a geographical consequence of God's coming into the world in the hill country of Judah. The presence of Jesus Christ in the Near East, and the subsequent spread of the Christian Church through Africa and Europe, reduced the number of peoples over whom the Devil could reign and, as it were, pushed his dominion out to the farthest reaches of the world. In doing so, the Devil was said by Acosta to have been enclosed 'like a wild beast in his cage'; and from that prison, he 'attacked the most remote and savage peoples' in the hopes of maintaining his self-proclaimed and false identity as a 'divinity'.⁸⁶ It was believed by the missionary that the Devil's greatest ambition was to replace God in the hearts of human persons, always longing to be 'accepted and honoured as God, and to steal and appropriate himself, in every way that he can, what is owed only to the Most High God'; the Amerindian peoples were considered ripe targets for this end since they were thought to be some of the 'blind nations of the world', whom the 'splendour of the Gospel has not yet illuminated'.⁸⁷ With this in mind, Acosta viewed indigenous spiritual ritual as ultimately instigated by the Devil, and any similarities between these practices and those found in Catholicism were the

⁸⁶ Natural and Moral History, p. 254.

⁸⁷ Natural and Moral History, p. 253.

product of the Devil's intentional effort to form an alternative 'church' according to his own designs.⁸⁸

Though the Devil was thought to long for adoration, Acosta pointed out that this desire was ultimately fed by the deceiver's hatred for human persons. The missionary suggested that the Devil attempts to achieve his ambitions by manipulating the minds of the Amerindians so as to encourage their deification of materiality: since 'he knows that the greatest harm [man] can do to himself is to worship the creature as God, he never ceases to invent ways of idolatry with which to destroy men and make them God's enemies.'⁸⁹ This exaltation of both material objects and other living things, according to Acosta, is encouraged by the Devil for two reasons:

One is to make [man] deny God, according to the verse, "He forsook who made him" [Hebrews 11:27]; the other is to make [man] subject to something lower than himself, for all creatures are inferior to the rational creature.⁹⁰

It was therefore thought that the Devil was encouraging Amerindians to elevate the material world to a divine status in order to distract them from the true presence of God, from realizing their own divine identity as persons created by God, from ordering the material world according to God's plan, and from seeing the emptiness of relying on created things to find both personal and cultural fulfilment.

8. The Christian Humanists and the Demonic

Having examined the influences that formed the authors' understanding of the Devil, we can now examine his place within the *Relations*. To do so, we must begin by addressing historian Peter Goddard's claim that interest in the demonic took up little space in the authors' religious imagination. He argues instead that

⁸⁸ Natural and Moral History, pp. 300–04.

⁸⁹ Natural and Moral History, pp. 254–55.

⁹⁰ Natural and Moral History, p. 255.

In place of the positive obsession with the devil's physical presence in the world that abounded in the seventeenth century, French Jesuits, including Paul le Jeune, Jean de Brébeuf, and Paul Ragueneau, the dominant figures in the Canadian mission up to 1650, developed an analysis of [native] life which stressed the historical and cultural backwardness of these peoples, and which emphasised the illusory and fraudulent nature of the native claims about the supernatural.⁹¹

Goddard suggests that the Jesuits 'tended to refute the claim that the Devil was actually present in [Amerindian] life', and argues instead that Satan was 'no more than a bystander in New France'.⁹² To make this claim, he highlights the more intellectual perspective of the French Jesuits, whose preaching avoided the tenacious presentation of the demonic. He also suggests that the possession of Surin was often understood among his peers to be a form of mental illness, indicating that the Jesuits themselves may have been sceptical about claims of demonic possession.⁹³ When analysing the *Relations*, Goddard presents a strong case, pointing out that before 1636, Le Jeune was sceptical about the presence of the Devil in Amerindian rituals, rejecting any similarity on this point with the Amerindians in the Spanish missions. He points to Ragueneau's statement in 1645 that 'It is easy to call irreligion what is merely stupidity, and to take for diabolic working something that is nothing more than human'.⁹⁴ He also suggests that, 'While he [the devil] continued to occupy a place in the minds of these men of faith [...] he received, if anything, very weak credit for the ignorance and delusion of these peoples', arguing instead that 'Jesuits focused on the sins of these peoples, their offence to God, and their correctable ignorance'.⁹⁵

This is a compelling argument. Nevertheless, we might consider some additional factors that can both deepen Goddard's analysis and advance our own. First, between 1632 and 1636, Le Jeune did indeed consistently question the real

⁹¹ Peter A. Goddard, 'The Devil in New France: Jesuit Demonology, 1611–50', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 78 (1997), 1–183 (p. 42).

⁹² Goddard, 'The Devil in New France', pp. 42, 62.

⁹³ Goddard, 'The Devil in New France', p. 47.

⁹⁴ Goddard, 'The Devil in New France', pp. 49, 51, 53, 55, 59.

⁹⁵ Goddard, 'The Devil in New France', p. 61.

presence of demonic power in the Amerindian medicine men. His strategy was to make light of their supposed powers, to laugh — or attempt to bring the Amerindians to at least a self-effacing grin — at the realization of the futility of many of their spiritual practices. One telling example was provided in 1634, when he described a village's encounter with the *Manitou*.⁹⁶ His hosts were struck dumb in the middle of the night after a woman proclaimed that she saw the life-force moving through the village. But the missionary began to laugh out loud, rose from his spot, and called out in their own language, 'I am not afraid'. Assuring his companions that the *Manitou* would not 'dare come where he was', he claimed to have brought them all from a state of fear to one of laughter.⁹⁷ Here, the woman's belief that she saw the *Manitou*, and the subsequent fear of the community, were confronted by a pedagogical style of direct challenge and humour that is consistent throughout Le Jeune's early years in *Nouvelle-France*. Furthermore, he often refers to the medicine men among the Amerindian peoples as 'jugglers', 'tricksters' and 'charlatans'.⁹⁸

However, this strategy does not negate the possibility that Le Jeune may have believed that the Devil was present. His light-heartedness concerning the demonic may reflect the teaching of Louis Lallemant, who, when describing the attitude of Xavier towards the attacks of the Devil, wrote:

The saint laughed his threats to scorn, all his confidence being fixed on God. In one of his letters he writes that: 'the surest remedy in such circumstances is to fear nothing, putting our trust in God'; and that 'the greatest evil that can befall us is to be afraid of the enemies of God when we are maintaining His cause'.⁹⁹

Here Louis Lallemant suggests that any adversity, demonic or otherwise is to be faced down with laughter and 'confidence'; perhaps Le Jeune took this same approach in

⁹⁶ The *Manitou* is thought to be the omnipresent spiritual life force among Algonquian groups of Amerindians that is manifest in all living things, in persons and in events. See Kathleen J. Bragdon, *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Northeast* (New York, 2001), p. 18.

⁹⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 224–25.

⁹⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 19, 249; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 60, 107–08.

⁹⁹ *SD*, p. 185.

Nouvelle-France, relying on the experience of Xavier and the advice of his former spiritual director.

It should be noted that Le Jeune's position had, however, dramatically changed by the 1637 *Relation*, and is reinforced by the observations of both Pierre Pijart (1608-76) and Le Mercier. In a chapter devoted to the question of whether the Amerindian 'sorcerers' have 'communication with the Devil', Le Jeune wrote:

Let us answer the question proposed in the heading of this chapter, namely, whether these sorcerers really have communication with the devil. If what I am about to tell you is true, there is no doubt that the demons sometimes manifest themselves to them. But, I have believed until now that in effect the devil deluded them, filling their understandings with error and their wills with malice. Though I persuaded myself that he did not reveal himself visibly, and that all the things their sorcerers did were only deceptions they contrived, in order to derive therefrom some profit [...] I am now beginning to doubt, even to incline to the other side.¹⁰⁰

He went on to describe a personal encounter in which the incantations of a medicine man brought violent winds that bent almost to the ground a tent that had taken several strong men to erect.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, he included an account by Pijart, who witnessed another medicine man hold a large burning stone in his mouth for several hours while dancing hysterically around a cabin, in an attempt to heal a sick person. Presenting Le Jeune with this stone, still bearing teeth marks, the missionary told him that the mouth and lips of the 'sorcerer' were totally unharmed.¹⁰² Le Mercier reports the same event, describing it as a 'witches' Sabbath'.¹⁰³

Whereas Goddard argues that his change of attitude reflects Le Jeune's attempt to describe growing opposition in the mission and, perhaps, his growing fatigue, there is another possibility. It is perhaps no coincidence that this change in Le Jeune's position came only one year after the publication of Surin's book *Le Triomphe de l'amour divin sur les puissances de l'enfer en la possession de la Mère*

¹⁰⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 161–62.

¹⁰¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 162–64.

¹⁰² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 165–66.

¹⁰³ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 222.

supérieure des Ursulines de Loudun (1636). Surin and Le Jeune had shared several months together in Rouen during their Tertianship. At that time, both were under the direction of Louis Lallemand.¹⁰⁴ It is also interesting to note that Le Mercier chose to refer to the demonic ritual with the stone as a ‘witches’ Sabbath’, since the priest Urbain Grandier had been accused of participating in such a ritual in his desire to evoke the sexual passions of Jeanne des Anges and her convent sisters.¹⁰⁵ Though there is no explicit reference to Surin in the *Relations*, and to this date no evidence that his work made it to the shores of *Nouvelle-France* in 1636, the temporal and spiritual connection between these two men while in France, and the role of the Jesuits in exorcisms there, may have contributed to the change in Le Jeune’s thinking, and indeed in that of several of the authors.

Second, before this change of heart, the emphasis that Le Jeune placed on the Devil’s absence from *Nouvelle-France*, as outlined in his 1634 *Relation*, illustrates in reality his belief that the Devil was immediately present among the *Américains méridionaux*. As Goddard points out, Le Jeune does in that *Relation* write that:

I am persuaded that there has been some sorcerer or magician here, if what they tell me is true about diseases and cures which they describe to me; it is a strange thing, in my opinion, that the devil, who is visible to the South Americans, and who so beats and torments them that they would like to get rid of such a guest, does not communicate himself visibly and sensibly to our Savages. I know that there are persons of contrary opinion, who believe in the reports of these *barbares*; but, when I urge them, they all admit that they have seen nothing of that of which they speak, but that they have only heard it related by others.¹⁰⁶

Yet, immediately following that passage, he suggests that

It is not the same with the Americans of the south. Our Europeans have heard the noise, the voice, and the blows that the devil deals to these poor slaves, and a Frenchman, worthy of belief, has assured me that he heard it with his own ears.

¹⁰⁴ Jean Joseph Surin and Paul Le Jeune overlapped during their Tertianships in Rouen, under the direction of Louis Lallemand. Cf. Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 360; *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, I, 237.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Robert Rapley, ‘A Case of Witchcraft’: The Trial of Urbain Grandier (Manchester, 1998).

¹⁰⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 78.

This implies that Le Jeune was indeed open to belief in the Devil's active presence among Amerindian peoples in the New World; but, lacking any real proof, he remained unconvinced about the role of the demonic among those to whom he ministered. Furthermore, he continued with an example from the Jesuit missions to the Americans of the south, where he stated that the 'Huguenots' there are constantly plagued by these same Devils; but 'when a Catholic enters their company', the evil spectres vanish.¹⁰⁷ This example presents a striking concordance with several cases in France where, as we have seen, the Devil professed, through the possessed, both his role in Calvinism and his powerlessness in the face of the Catholic religion.

9. The Great Deception of the Devil among the Amerindians

In fact, the texts present Satan as very active in *Nouvelle-France*. Exhibiting a view that combines the ideas of Louis Lalemant and Acosta, they suggest that, in Jérôme Lalemant's words, 'the spirit of God and of the devil were struggling in the minds and hearts' of the indigenous peoples.¹⁰⁸ Unaware of Jesus Christ, the Amerindians were described as caught up in the Devil's deceptions; all the time believing that they worshipped their creator while actually worshipping their greatest enemy. In 1636, Brébeuf observes that

These People are not so stupid as not to seek and to acknowledge something above the senses. And, since their lewdness and licentiousness hinder them from finding God, it is very easy for the devil to thrust himself in and to offer them his services in their pressing necessities, causing them to pay him a homage that is not due to him, and having intercourse with certain more subtle minds, who extend his influence among these poor people.¹⁰⁹

The missionary here acknowledges that the Amerindians have a natural ability to intuit the presence of a metaphysical reality that exists beyond their senses; because they are without knowledge of God, however, and enslaved by their material needs,

¹⁰⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 78–79.

¹⁰⁸ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 109.

¹⁰⁹ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 132–33.

the Devil is said to have taken control of them as their deity. And he makes an important distinction between those who, filled with ‘lewdness’ and ‘licentiousness’ simply accept whatever Satan ‘thrusts’ at them, and those few, of a ‘subtle’ mind, who may have actual intercourse with him. In other words, most were thought to have been ignorant of the true metaphysical forces active behind their religious experience, focusing only on the apparent material benefits of their rituals. For this reason, Brébeuf suggested that ‘the devil has been, so to speak, adored and recognized as God during so many ages’.¹¹⁰

Jérôme Lalemant similarly understood that ‘evil spirits’ were implanting ideas in the minds of the Amerindians about their life on earth — and indeed the afterlife — so as to overshadow their reason and leave them unknowingly bound to Satan.¹¹¹ For example, in 1640, the missionary described a vision experienced by one Amerindian that, in his mind, confirmed the evil intent of the Devil to reign clandestinely as the supreme deity in the land:

A demon appeared to him under the form of a tall and handsome young man. ‘Fear not’, said this beautiful spirit; ‘I am the master of the earth, whom you [*Hurons*] honour under the name of *Iouskeha*. I am the one whom the French wrongly call Jesus, but they do not know me. I have pity on your country, which I have taken under my protection. I come to teach you both the causes and remedies for your misfortune. It is the strangers who alone are the cause of it’.¹¹²

Notice that the apparition is said to be a ‘demon’; it then claims to be a deity of the Amerindian tradition, and therefore the ‘master of the earth’. And, finally, it maintains that the missionaries are actually the mistaken ones, and that their false belief in Jesus Christ is the real source of all the misfortunes that plague the lands.

This idea of Satan and his demons as a surreptitious presence behind most Amerindian traditions left the authors believing, as Vimont wrote, that Amerindian

¹¹⁰ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 15.

¹¹¹ Cf. Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 103–04; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 152–53.

¹¹² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 153–3.

ways were ‘errors’ of the ‘Prince of Darkness’, ‘the lies of the devil’, which could only be overcome by the ‘light’ of Christ.¹¹³ Le Jeune also believed that it was the ‘malice of devils’ that allowed the fraudulent spiritual practices of the Amerindians ‘to pass for truths’.¹¹⁴ And Jérôme Lalemant concluded that all of their dances, feasts, ceremonies, dream interpretations and, apparitions of talking birds or snakes ‘have been taught to them by the demons’.¹¹⁵ All of these encouragements of Satan, according to Le Mercier, were intensified with the coming of the missionaries, so as further to close the Amerindians’ minds to the words of their true deity, Jesus Christ.¹¹⁶

The greatest manifestation of this deception was thought to be the Amerindian’s devotion to objects in the material world rather than to God: a perception no doubt informed by both the spirituality of Louis Lallemant and the observations of Acosta. This devotion could be seen in their rituals. In 1637, Le Jeune recounted one attempt of his to explain the difference between the goodness of God and the demands of Amerindian spirits in relation to healing the sick:

They command you [...] to make feasts of animals, they sometimes gather a multitude of people from several villages, and have ridiculous or abominable ceremonies performed, and all that at the expense of the patient, who receives no other benefit from these demoniacs than to be tormented by their cries and their uproar, and to be devoured to the bones by their gluttony, without counting the presents that must be made to them. When we desire to obtain something, we are not subject to so many demons, to stones and to rocks, to streams of water, to the foolish ceremonies you perform. We have recourse to one God only [...] who is goodness itself.¹¹⁷

This account reveals two important perceptions held by the author. First, he emphasizes that the demands of the spirits, articulated through the medicine men, encourage ridiculous behaviour such as gluttony and greed, all of which is instigated

¹¹³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 8.

¹¹⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 273.

¹¹⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 129–30. Cf. Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 107–08.

¹¹⁶ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 154–55; cf. Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 33.

¹¹⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 196–97.

by the Devil. He suggests that Amerindian practices are self-centred, equating the promise of cures with the reckless abandonment of the patient, the satiation of the body and the acquisition of material possessions. Second, he makes an important distinction between honouring God and honouring the demons, or the Devil's servants, through material objects such as 'rocks' or 'streams of water'. Furthermore, he suggests that the Amerindians are 'subject' to these material objects, a disposition which, following Louis Lallemand's school of thought, was believed to be encouraged by the Devil, who wishes to distract human persons from their true Creator.

Le Jeune also suggests that the Amerindian rituals are an attempt to 'join together the Ark and Dragon', but then proclaims from Sacred Scripture that 'Jesus does not agree with Belial' (II Corinthians 6:15), one of Lucifer's fallen angels.¹¹⁸ This suggests that the authors saw the Amerindians as correctly recognizing that there was indeed some greater divine being to worship, represented here by the Ark of the Covenant and Jesus Christ, but having unknowingly opted instead for the 'dragon' — the Devil — in place of God. In 1642, Jérôme Lalemant suggested that the Amerindian devotion to their 'demons' was a twisted equivalent of the Christian devotion to saints:

There is hardly a day in the year on which some demon does not have special homage rendered unto him. But, as in Christianity, after each Saint has had his own day, there is a more solemn feast day, on which all the saints are honoured in company, so likewise in this country, after each demon has been honoured in his turn, there is a public solemnity in winter, at which all the demons are honoured on the same day.¹¹⁹

Acosta, who stated that the Devil instigated Peruvian rituals that 'mimic' the Sacraments and feasts of the Catholic Church, presented this same idea.¹²⁰ All told, it would seem that the authors of the *Relations* held a strong belief that the Devil was

¹¹⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 86.

¹¹⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641-1642), p. 36.

¹²⁰ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, pp. 300–23.

manipulating the Amerindian spiritual traditions in order to hold sway over their lives. This was a consistent concern of the missionaries who were attempting to evangelize, and was raised in the narrative on multiple occasions.¹²¹

10. The Manifestations of the Demonic in Amerindian Life

The particular circumstances in which the authors identified these demonic manipulations were numerous. There is a particular focus on the incantations of the medicine men, devout adherence to the interpretation of dreams, feasts and sacrificial offerings, so-called demonic powers and possession, all of which fall under Louis Lallemand's understanding of 'devilish wisdom'.¹²² Even before his 'conversion' on the matter in the 1637 *Relation*, Le Jeune had cautiously speculated about the relationship between medicine men and the Devil. As early as 1633, he confessed that, despite the fact he was sure that most Amerindians had no more of a regular communication with the demonic than he did himself, he suggested, 'Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that there are some among them who really have communication with the devil'.¹²³ Referred to as jugglers, tricksters, charlatans, liars, magicians or sorcerers, these men were often thought to be unsuspecting human conduits of the Devil. This being said, it is important to highlight again that the authors generally believed the Amerindians were fooled by the Devil into following him through their particular spiritual beliefs, and were not knowingly worshipers of Satan. In 1637, Le Jeune is very clear about this distinction when he refers to the place of the good and bad *Manitou* in Montagnet spiritual practices:

¹²¹ Cf. Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 70–71, 144–45; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 88, 119–20; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 17; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 120–21; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 26, 37–38, Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), pp. 22–23; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 123–24, 138–39.

¹²² Cf., p. 161.

¹²³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 81. Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 143; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 100–01.

The *Montagnet* [savages] give the name *Manitou* to all Nature superior to man, good or bad. This is why, when we speak of God, they sometimes call him the good Manitou; and, when we speak of the devil, they call him the bad Manitou. Now all those who have any special acquaintance with the Manitou, be he good or bad, are called among them ‘Man[i]touisioekhi’. And, inasmuch as these persons know only the bad Manitou, that is, the devil, we call them sorcerers. Not that the devil communicates with them as obviously as he does with the sorcerers and magicians of Europe; but we have no other name to give them, since they even do some of the acts of genuine sorcerers, as to kill one another by charms, or wishes, and imprecations, by the abetting of the Manitou, by poisons which they concoct.¹²⁴

Notice that Le Jeune makes a distinction here between the communication of sorcerers with the Devil in Europe, and the sorcerers in *Nouvelle-France*. The former are said clearly to be in communion with the Devil, the latter less ‘obviously’. This illustrates how in the European context witches and sorcerers, being aware of God and the Devil, were thought consciously to choose to join with Satan in a pact, whereas the Amerindians were honouring figures such as the *Manitou*, unaware of the demonic operating behind them.

Jérôme Lalemant makes a distinction between what he sees as the ‘sorcerers’ and ‘magicians’ among the Hurons, and applies this distinction to all the Amerindian communities in *Nouvelle-France*. Both groups are described as ‘imps of Satan’, but the sorcerers are said to be those who are principally ‘instruments of the demon for procuring the death of those whom they are supposed to bewitch’, while the magicians honour certain demons in order to ‘predict the results of war’.¹²⁵ It is the successful efforts of these sorcerers and magicians that provide proof to the authors of their unknowing communion with the Devil. As we have already seen, Pijart attested to the extraordinary physical feat of the ‘sorcerer’ who carried a red-hot stone in his mouth without any pain or damage.¹²⁶ In 1636, Brébeuf suggested that certain medicine men held some pact with the ‘devil’, which may have actually led to God’s

¹²⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 154–55.

¹²⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 4–6.

¹²⁶ See: Chapter Three, pp. 158–9.

punishing a certain village with drought.¹²⁷ In 1637, Le Mercier attributed the healing of some twelve sick Amerindians to a ritual performed by a medicine man, and claimed that this effect came about at the behest of ‘demons’.¹²⁸ In 1639, Le Jeune argued that, though most of the ‘sorcerers’ only pretended to have demonic powers in order to obtain gifts from the people, from what he had witnessed, some did consciously evoke the Devil’s supernatural abilities to ‘kill men with their charms’.¹²⁹ That same year, Jérôme Lalemant suggested that any knowledge that the medicine men had about healing was ‘abominations’ and ‘deviltries [...] dependent upon the knowledge that the devil gives him on the nature of the disease’.¹³⁰ He also attested in 1640 that he saw the curse of a medicine man work against Amerindians who challenged him, and again attributes this power to the Devil.¹³¹ Furthermore, in 1647, he acknowledged that several of their ‘prophets’ and ‘soothsayers’ likely communed with Devils, since their dreams and skills often divined facts that could not otherwise be known to them.¹³²

Another important aspect of the Amerindians’ spiritual practice described in the *Relations* was the dreamscape, often believed by the authors to be a principal means by which the Devil could communicate with them. In 1642, Vimont suggested on two different occasions that dreams formed a kind of dogmatic theology for the Amerindians, and could not therefore be ignored in their culture: ‘in France, a dream is just a dream, here it is a point of theology’. He made it clear, though, that the dreams were manipulated by the Devil. He wrote: ‘the *sauvages* have no stronger

¹²⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 25–6.

¹²⁸ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 165–6.

¹²⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 116.

¹³⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–39), pp. 113–14.

¹³¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–40), p. 9.

¹³² Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 195.

belief than dreams; they are their oracles, which they obey as a sovereign divinity'.¹³³ As early as 1633, Le Jeune had left room for the possibility that visions and premonitions experienced in Amerindian dreams could be manipulated by the Devil, writing that either 'the devil had given them this sentiment, or that among all their dreams there is, now and then, one that perchance happens to be true'.¹³⁴ By 1637, however, his beliefs had changed, and he suggested to one Amerindian that 'the devil meddles with your imaginations in the night and, if you obey him, he will make you the most wicked people in the world'.¹³⁵ Brébeuf suggested that the Devil 'slips' many 'infamies' and 'uncleanness' into the dreams of Amerindians,¹³⁶ While Jérôme Lalemant insisted that adherence to visions in dreams was actually taught to the Amerindians by the Devil, along with many other rituals that they held dear.¹³⁷

The authors therefore believed that the Devil communicated ideas directly to Amerindians through their dreams so that they might follow his desires for them. Satan was the one who sometimes, in their dreams, taught them songs to sing during feasts.¹³⁸ It was the Devil who convinced the sick in dreams that they should be given whatever material objects they desired so as to induce a miraculous healing.¹³⁹ And he was even said to appear in dreams hoping to convince new Christians to return to their old traditions.¹⁴⁰ Dreams were also thought to provide their recipients with premonitions or portents that helped them to heal the sick and avoid ambush in war, and gave them insight into the future. Brébeuf argued that whether the information

¹³³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 141–42. See also Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 54. Cf. U. Haskins Gonthier, 'Postcolonial Perspectives on Early Modern Canada: Champlain's *Voyages de la Nouvelle-France* (1632)', *French Studies*, 66.2 (2012), which has some interesting comments (among the postcolonial analysis) about European and non-European attitudes to dreams.

¹³⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 137.

¹³⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 142.

¹³⁶ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 132.

¹³⁷ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 129–30.

¹³⁸ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 130.

¹³⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 139–40.

¹⁴⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 81.

arising from dreams was right or wrong, the dreams certainly came from the Devil, since the very promise of power in them distracted the Amerindians from God.¹⁴¹ Examples did arise where the dreams revealed some sort of truth, and in these cases the authors were quick to attribute them to demonic influence. In 1637 Le Jeune referred to an occasion when a man dreamt that a countryman had been killed by a surprise attack from an Iroquois, only to discover a few days later that this was true.¹⁴² In 1640, Jérôme Lalemant wrote that the Devil had revealed to an Amerindian in a dream that one of the missionaries, some two leagues away, would become very ill and, as the author discovered, the unnamed priest in question soon afterwards suffered from ‘a heavy fever, a pain in the stomach, and headache, and in all the symptoms of a severe illness’.¹⁴³

The authors also recognized the encouragement of the Devil in the various ritual feasts of the Amerindians. It appeared to them that, through these rituals, the Devil kept the Amerindians distracted from greater divine truths and, in constant need of food, weakened their general moral resolve through the gluttonous behaviour it required. In 1636, Brébeuf wrote that:

The devil keeps them so strongly attached to the feasts that they could not possibly be more so, he knowing well that it is a means of rendering them still more brutal, and less capable of supernatural truths.

This observation again speaks to the missionaries’ exposure both to the *Exercices* and to the Louis Lallemand school, in which the devil is thought continuously to attempt to distract people from God by enticing them with carnal desires for pleasure. The feasts are therefore seen as gluttonous events, in which the participants believe that the satiation of desire will somehow spiritually lead to healing, the right passage of the dead, success in battle or visions of the future. Brébeuf described them in this way:

¹⁴¹ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 135–36.

¹⁴² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 160–61.

¹⁴³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 78–79.

They engage in them often whole days and whole nights, for they must, at the last, empty the kettle [...] they cry, driving away those who present themselves when the game of teeth has begun, and when the distributor has filled for each his bowl [...] And, whoever soonest accomplishes this, it is for him to be served again and again, until the kettle be empty. Is it not true, on hearing all this, and several other traits of gluttony, which I omit out of respect for good taste, to say that [...] the Kingdom of God is not in eating and drinking; such is indeed the one that the devil has usurped over these poor blind beings.¹⁴⁴

Here, Brébeuf illustrates the sense of two kingdoms that we saw in the *Exercices*, one of God and the other of the Devil, with gluttonous behaviour being one of the Devil's hallmarks. Again, Brébeuf suggests that it is the Devil who has encouraged this behaviour among the Amerindians, and that he is able to because they are 'poor blind beings' — in other words, still unaware of the true God.

Le Jeune suggested that demons wanted those attending feasts to gorge on food so that they might die sooner, whereas God disapproved of feasting, since he hoped that the Amerindians would live a long and full life.¹⁴⁵ Lalemant argued that the Devil encouraged feasts so that they might squander any extra provisions that nature or hard work had provided for their peace of mind in the winter months.¹⁴⁶ And the feasts often involved rituals performed by medicine men, sometimes requiring the sacrifice of an eel, a dog, bear, stags, or a piece of meat so as to appease spirits or induce healings, which were likewise considered by Le Jeune, Le Mercier and Lalemant to be instigated by the Devil.¹⁴⁷

Several of the authors also report that Amerindians seemed to have supernatural abilities that came from their connection with demons. In 1636, Le Jeune witnessed the ability of one person to intuit the arrival of another long before he was visible to the eyes. He wrote, 'There are some among them who say that their chest or

¹⁴⁴ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 123–24.

¹⁴⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 142.

¹⁴⁶ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 140–41; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 4.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 225; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 180–81, 223–24; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 137, 170–71, 146–47; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 171; Lalemant *Hurons* (1642), pp. 109, 113, 123.

breast throbs when someone is about to come’, and began to speculate as to whether this power might come from the Devil.¹⁴⁸ Again, in 1637 he witnessed an Amerindian proclaim that he felt in his chest that French ships would arrive on the following day, which they did. This brought the missionary to conclude that ‘the devil enters into them and causes this throbbing, more firmly to bind them to himself’.¹⁴⁹ Brébeuf argued that for centuries the Amerindians had had medicine men who performed healings, miraculous physical feats and curses without having been declared frauds, and therefore concluded that there was ‘some foundation for the belief that the Devil occasionally gives them assistance, and reveals himself to them for some temporal profit, and for their eternal damnation’.¹⁵⁰ Le Mercier attested to having heard some ‘evil source’ that spoke through a medicine man, boasting of the ability to cure the sick, during a small feast.¹⁵¹ Jérôme Lalemant affirmed that, with the help of some supernatural force, an elderly woman had slowly walked through a fire unharmed.¹⁵² Lalemant also offered an account of a spirit, which he referred to as the ‘devil’, appearing to a young man and promising him long health, four children and good hunting, should he commit himself to worshipping the spirit. The man did so, and Lalemant saw him, now an old man, one of the most prosperous in the village, and seemingly immune to the diseases that ravaged the nations.¹⁵³

11. The Devil versus the Missionaries and the Christian Community

Affirming that the Devil had entrenched himself in Amerindian culture and spiritual traditions, the authors consistently articulated their belief that he was actively fighting against their evangelical project. He did not want to give up his empire in the

¹⁴⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 133–34.

¹⁴⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 306.

¹⁵⁰ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 135.

¹⁵¹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 140.

¹⁵² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 146.

¹⁵³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 110–12.

Americas. He did not want the Amerindians to know about God and thereby have the ability to recognize his evil presence. He did not want their rituals to end, since these rituals were ultimately in his honour. He did not want to lose their souls to God. The authors thus concluded that almost every major obstacle to achieving their goal was put in place by the Devil and his demons. In particular, any Amerindians who suggested that baptism was a ceremony that killed or that the disease plaguing their lands was an intentional tool of the French to annihilate them, or who put social pressure on others who had converted, were ultimately instigated by the Devil. Furthermore, the authors described direct demonic attacks through dreams, possessions or visiting spectres. Such beliefs elevated these obstacles, and the suffering that they brought with them, from intercultural conflict to the battlefield of Jesus Christ and the ‘enemy of human nature’. The Devil was attacking Christ through them, and in this sense the missionaries faced a daily martyrdom from the intense pressures working against them and their Christian community.

In 1633, Le Jeune acknowledged that any success they might have among the Amerindians would spark demonic attack, suggesting that ‘The devil foresees this harvest’, and was labouring to prevent the spread of the gospel.¹⁵⁴ He believed that the efforts of the missionaries were a direct threat to the long-standing control of the Devil over the Amerindian peoples: the ‘demons’ had ‘put themselves on the defensive’ and were attacking the ‘infant church’.¹⁵⁵ He concluded that ‘troubles, wars, sickness, slanders, in a word all the machinations that can issue from the arsenal of the demons, have been directed against this holy enterprise’.¹⁵⁶ Brébeuf worried that the brutal Iroquois attacks against the Hurons were ‘stratagems of Satan to hinder

¹⁵⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), pp. 116–17.

¹⁵⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 1–2.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 206, 209, 264; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 40; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 3.

the conversion of these people'.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, he once declared there was a 'war that the powers of darkness have openly declared against us',¹⁵⁸ and that the 'devil' cannot endure 'the solemn baptism of some of the more notable savages'.¹⁵⁹ Likewise, Jérôme Lalemant named 'evil designs' working against his efforts, and referred to several of those who opposed the mission as 'instruments of Satan'.¹⁶⁰ There were times when Le Mercier even confessed that the 'devil seems to have the upper hand'.¹⁶¹

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the authors believed that baptism was the key to both the Amerindian's salvation and their greater human development. In the early years of their evangelical labours, immediate baptism was only offered to the dying, or granted to sick children by parents who were at a loss as to how otherwise to help them. It would appear that this fact brought many medicine men, captains and common folk among the different tribes to associate baptism with death; either believing that it was something to receive when they were dying or — to the detriment of the mission — that it somehow brought on death. The authors, however, often understood this idea to have been planted in the minds of these peoples by the Devil so that they would refuse the one thing that could help to set them free from his control. This predicament would be consistent with the authors' understanding of Satan since, as we have seen, he was regarded as the 'deceiver': having someone believe that the one thing that brought fullness of life was a source of death would be considered emblematic of his character.

In 1637, Le Jeune explained that many *sauvages* believed baptism to be harmful to life, which was why they did not consent to the ritual until they had 'lost

¹⁵⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 51–53.

¹⁵⁸ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 256.

¹⁵⁹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), pp. 2–3.

¹⁶⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 25, 82–83.

¹⁶¹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 232–33.

all hope'; he suggested that this idea was 'an error that the devil puts in their minds'.¹⁶² When, he concluded, the Jesuits appeared to convince many to the contrary, the results of these conversations were short-lived: 'as the devil is not willing to let them escape his hands, he soon causes them to fall again into their first doubts'.¹⁶³ Le Jeune believed that the Devil actively sought to dissuade those who, after attending a great deal of catechesis, authentically desired baptism. In one instance, a young Amerindian woman who had completed two years of religious instruction fell under intense demonic attack.

The devil tried to oppose this, for a sort of obsession, so violent that she instantly turned her head around, with horrible distortion, and her stomach grew enormously swollen. We saw that she was utterly terrified, and unable to utter a word, except, 'I am afraid, I am afraid'.¹⁶⁴

A young man, suffering from a severe illness, sought baptism, yet the Devil was said to have come to his older brother in a dream, and to have suggested instead he rely on the traditional rituals of their medicine men.¹⁶⁵ In another instance, the Devil was thought to have commanded an ice storm to prevent a missionary from going to baptize a sick person in a neighbouring village.¹⁶⁶ And Jérôme Lalemant is said to have celebrated the baptism of more than two hundred children in one year, 'in spite of the demons'.¹⁶⁷

Similarly, many Amerindians speculated that the Jesuits were the cause of the disease that spread through their lands, killing thousands of their people. Though it is clear that the Europeans did indeed unknowingly carry new and deadly contagions, our authors believed that it was the Devil who planted this idea in the minds of the Amerindians. Le Jeune concluded that the sickness came from their excessive

¹⁶² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 52–53. See: Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 109.

¹⁶³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 107–08.

¹⁶⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 21.

¹⁶⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), pp. 23–24.

¹⁶⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 34.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 107; Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 166–67.

drinking of brandy and their gluttonous lifestyle, ultimately encouraged by the Devil. He argued that the Amerindians blamed the French rather than their own behaviour because the Devil encouraged them to attribute ‘the cause of their mortality, not to their excesses, but to the law of God and to the multitude of the French, so as to estrange these poor *barbares* as much as possible from their salvation’.¹⁶⁸ He considered the illness that had arisen to be a deterrent devised by the Devil to prevent the re-settlement of Amerindians into permanent Christian communities, leaving them instead dispersed and nomadic.¹⁶⁹ Le Mercier suggested that ‘demons let loose’ the idea that the Jesuits brought disease and death to the people they had come to serve.¹⁷⁰ He saw the number of Amerindians dying without baptism, having refused it out of fear, as ‘Hell triumphing for a time’.¹⁷¹ And he made a correlation between the missionaries’ success in baptizing large numbers of people and the rise of rumours about baptism that, again, he believed had been incited by the Devil.¹⁷² Lalemant too saw the Devil at work, ‘not failing to reawaken all the old imaginations’ in people, bringing about the general belief that baptism was a deadly gift of the Fathers in the mission.¹⁷³

Even after baptism, however, the authors suggested that the Devil did not cease in his attempts to convince new Christians to return to their traditional ways. In 1640, Le Jeune wrote that a young Christian was tempted to leave his faith, at the instigation of the Devil, by an apostate who himself had left the faith to retain his two

¹⁶⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 105–06.

¹⁶⁹ Le Jeune, on several different occasions, suggested that the priority of offering permanent settlement to the Amerindians, so that they could have steady food sources, general stability and more easy access to the clergy was under constant attack from the devil. Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 132; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 48–49; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 34–35, 36, 191. On the broader question of reductions in Canada, see Tako Abé, ‘The Missionary Réductions in New France: An Epistemological Problem with a Popular Historical Theory’, *French Colonial History* 15 (2014).

¹⁷⁰ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 162–63.

¹⁷¹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 6.

¹⁷² Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 12.

¹⁷³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 11.

wives.¹⁷⁴ Both Lalemant and Vimont suggested that the Devil sought out model Christians and laboured to prevent them from praying or seeking spiritual counsel, always trying to get them to participate in one of their former rituals.¹⁷⁵ He sees ‘Satan’s reign’ over the lands bringing ‘most powerful influences in the country’ to bear against the Christians, who respond with ‘courage’, ‘zeal’ and ‘constancy’.¹⁷⁶ In 1642, Jérôme Lalemant described the plight of one Amerindian as follows:

The cabin of this new Christian is soon attacked on all sides. One of his nephews falls ill, and all despair of his recovery. He is informed of the death of another, who has been drowned in the waters. The devil enters into the body of one of his nieces, who is an infidel, and makes her frenzied. His nearest relatives conspire against him and the quarrel almost extends to murder on both sides.¹⁷⁷

Another man is tempted by a demon to divorce his wife, despite Christian teaching.¹⁷⁸ One cabin of Christians was overshadowed by ‘three demons’, attempting to frighten all who were inside and to convince them to abandon their faith.¹⁷⁹ Another Christian felt the presence of the demonic inside her mind, attempting to sway her virtue, only to defeat him by praying ‘Jesus have pity on me’.¹⁸⁰ In one case the Devil appeared to a Christian warrior, threatening that he would be captured in battle and brutally tortured should he remain firm in his faith, while yet another was told in a vision that if he persisted in his Christian life, he would suffer great evils.¹⁸¹ Still another was visited by the Devil in his sleep; Satan mockingly recited the rosary and attempted to make light of the prayers that the Christian had been taught.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 68–69.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639); Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 47–8, 59–60, 157–58; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), p. 33; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), pp. 50–51.

¹⁷⁶ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 28–29.

¹⁷⁷ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), p. 59.

¹⁷⁸ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 26.

¹⁷⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 35–36.

¹⁸⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 48–49.

¹⁸¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 114, 121–22.

¹⁸² Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 157–58.

Within the period of our study there are also five descriptions of Amerindians said by the authors to be directly possessed by the Devil. In 1637, Le Jeune described the plight of an apostate who, after rejecting her newfound Christianity, was ‘carried away by the devil’. She was said to have attempted to kill herself on multiple occasions, and to be raised more than a metre in the air, after which she simply vanished into the night never to be seen again.¹⁸³ On two occasions, it was said that a Devil possessed the minds of certain men, urging them to seek out and kill Frenchmen. First, in 1640, Lalemant was confronted by a young man who had been told by a voice in his head either to kill a Jesuit or to face untold turmoil in his life. He wrote, ‘The devil possesses this man; he becomes furious, he runs through the village, hatchet in hand, looking for a Frenchman’. Tied up by villagers, his passions did not cease and his eyes remained eerily fixed on the priest in a way described as a demonic. Only after being offered an enemy captive to kill did he recover from his impassioned rage.¹⁸⁴ Then again, in 1642, a man is said to have cried out that,

A devil had entered into his body, and that this demon had told him to take him for his father, to follow his guidance, and to rest assured that he had love for him; but that he must kill all the Frenchmen, as they alone were ruining the whole country.¹⁸⁵

Running through the woods, this man was unstoppable and immune to pain, as he tore his skin leaping through briar patches and thorns. Days later, Jérôme Lalemant reported that, mysteriously, the ‘devil quitted his abode’ and the man thereafter repentantly approached the Jesuits, hoping for baptism.¹⁸⁶

The authors also point out that several of the murdered missionaries were afflicted with demonic attacks. In the 1647 necrology of Jogues, Lalemant wrote that the Jesuit was indeed aware that his mission to the Iroquois would involve a

¹⁸³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 51.

¹⁸⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 86–87.

¹⁸⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 102–03.

¹⁸⁶ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 105–06.

confrontation with demons, yet, knowing the desire of his superior to send him nonetheless,

‘Go’ was enough for him. There is no monster, there is no demon that he would not have confronted with that word [...] God alone, for love of whom he had exposed himself to a thousand dangers, came to his thoughts and occupied his whole soul.¹⁸⁷

Similarly, Lalemant wrote that de Lalande understood that the precarious nature of his journey to the Iroquois lands would involve the retaliation of evil forces, yet his willingness to die for God ‘enabled him to pass into a life which no longer fears either the rage of those barbarians, or the fury of the demons, or the pangs of death’.¹⁸⁸

Despite his inability to grasp the languages necessary for active ministry, Chabanel was said to have made a vow to remain his entire life in *Nouvelle-France*. Ragueneau stated that the young linguist, who indeed never mastered the Algonquin language, was thereafter tempted daily by the Devil to return to France where his skills would be better utilized. Yet, despite these spiritual attacks, he remained firm in his resolve, ‘the devil never having got the better of him’.¹⁸⁹ Finally, in the necrology of Brébeuf, Ragueneau refers to several references in the missionary’s journal that indicated direct forms of demonic attack. During a contentious moment among the Hurons in 1637, when the veteran missionary feared that all of his companions would face summary execution, Ragueneau suggests that,

Demons appeared to him at sundry times. These were now like men who were becoming enraged, at other times like awful monsters, [...] which strove to fall upon him. These spectres gave him no horror, nor any impulse of fear. He placed his confidence in God. He said to them, ‘Do upon me that which God permits you; for without his will a hair will not fall from my head’.¹⁹⁰

Ragueneau tells of another vision of death, this time taking the form of a ‘skeleton’, a taunting omen indicating the intention among visiting Amerindians to

¹⁸⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 139.

¹⁸⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 133.

¹⁸⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 61.

¹⁹⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 67.

kill all of the missionaries among the Hurons.¹⁹¹ The Devil is also said to have tempted Brébeuf's resolve to maintain his chastity, when a young woman appeared before him, 'uttering unseemly language', and breathing a fire that could 'come only from a hell'.¹⁹² The priest, understanding that this was the work of the Devil, 'made upon himself the sign of the cross, without answering any word, and this spectre, disguised beneath a woman's dress, disappeared at that same moment'.¹⁹³

Always underfoot, the Devil was thought to be constantly working to trip up the efforts of the missionaries. The authors suggest that they are at war with demonic forces, whose arsenal is trouble, sickness and slander against them. They hope to bring knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the Devil makes this task difficult by closing the minds of many Amerindians to reason. The Jesuits want to baptize the Amerindians and provide access for them to the sacraments of the Church, so that they may rise above the temptations they face and discover a higher form of human living; yet the so called 'emperor' of their lands encourages the Amerindians to conclude that baptism is actually an evil power that would only destroy them. The missionaries believe that their teaching will infuse new life into Amerindian culture, yet the Devil is working hard to cast them as harbingers of death. When some Amerindians do accept baptism, they are plagued with scorn from their fellow-countrymen and attacked with demonic visions that mock their newfound faith. Meanwhile, others, yet to embrace this faith, are afflicted by demonic possession, and in two recorded cases, in this state, become hell-bent on killing Frenchmen. Finally, the Devil is said continuously to tempt some missionaries to leave the land, others with the fear of death, and even to have appeared to them directly as apparitions meant to dishearten

¹⁹¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 68.

¹⁹² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 83.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

them. With this, the missionaries are presented as suffering servants of God who, at the Devil's instigation, are misunderstood and feared, while all the time facing his violent attacks in a culture that he is said to control. This constant suffering for God as they battle the Devil, makes their descriptions of their daily encounter with adversity a part of the larger rhetoric of martyrdom found throughout the *Relations*.

12. Conclusion

The Devil, as an active character throughout the narratives, is the principal villain who labours against the evangelical efforts of the Jesuits. He is thought to be the enemy of God, who looks for any opportunity to prevent the Amerindians from embracing the Christian faith. His presence in *Nouvelle-France* is thought to be real, his plan is often identified, and the authors claim to experience his constant attacks. Any reader of the *Relations* must, therefore, keep this religious worldview in mind when studying the events chronicled in these accounts. When the authors describe the French colony as the 'Empire of Satan', they are expressing a metaphysical belief that the absence of the Christian faith among the Amerindian peoples has allowed the Devil to manipulate both their personal lives and their larger culture, to the extent that he is thought to reign over their lands.

Two forms of concrete historical data underlie this worldview and the eyewitness accounts of the missionaries in the field appear to confirm it. First, the authors were themselves of the generation that experienced personally the violent conflict between Catholics and Huguenots in France. Amidst this conflict, they were aware that, amidst reports of a dramatic rise in demonic possessions, people heard from the possessed themselves that the Devil had instigated Calvinism. Furthermore, doctrine from the Council of Trent asserted on multiple occasions that Satan had inspired the heresy found in new Christian sects, and thus any other metaphysical

construct outside Catholicism could be construed as having a demonic provenance that placed it in opposition to the supposed true faith. Starting with this perception that religious experience not rooted in Catholic doctrine was likely to be demonic in origin, it followed that the spiritual traditions of the Amerindians, who did not know anything about Christ, would have a similar origin. The work of Acosta clearly states this same idea.

The sixteenth-century missionaries to the Indies did not belittle the human identity of the Amerindians, but pointed out that, without Christ, they had been unknowingly caught up into Satan's control and kept there by rituals and social practices that he had encouraged to develop. Le Jeune, the superior of the mission, was initially unwilling to apply these observations to the Amerindians of *Nouvelle-France*, but subsequently decided that many of the supernatural powers exhibited by the indigenous peoples left little room for doubt. The Jesuit authors in *Nouvelle-France* therefore understood the 'Empire of Satan' to be filled with subjects who unknowingly honoured him. They claimed that, to maintain this illusion, the Devil often attempted to block the minds of Amerindians against evangelical instruction, to overshadow their reason and to fill their thoughts with false truths. He was thought to maintain this control by instigating the various rituals practised in the culture, rituals that encouraged various forms of sinfully excessive self-gratification. Any power exhibited by medicine men was said to be demonic in nature, suggesting that the Devil brought about healings, clairvoyance, levitation, the displacement of objects, curses, prophetic pronouncements and soothsaying in order to keep them convinced in their beliefs. Dreams, miracles attributed to celebrating feasts, and any other supernatural events and abilities were likewise understood to be demonic in origin. This conclusion is drawn from the authors' perception that these rituals largely

focussed on achieving material security, personal safety, good health, sexual intercourse, repose and revenge against their enemies. All of these reflected, for the authors, a self-centredness that their experience of the *Exercises* and of Louis Lallemand's teaching on spirituality would identify with age-old temptations of the Devil to degrade the Amerindians' true human identity as children of God.

For this reason, the authors suggest that they have both physically and spiritually entered into a battle at God's behest in which the two standards of good and evil clash over the souls of the Amerindian peoples. In this battle, the Jesuits and their companions are thought to face daily sufferings brought on by demonic forces that fight to keep their control of the lands. Their hopes of conversions are thwarted by the Devil's effort to make the sacrament of baptism appear dangerous. Their desire to live among the Amerindian people is often stifled by the Devil's idea that the Jesuits are in fact sorcerers who cast deadly spells to the ruin of all. New Christians are plagued with disheartening visions, dreams and spectres that threaten their resolve. Furthermore, the Jesuits themselves are said to have faced direct demonic attacks of various forms. To ignore this aspect of the narratives is both to lose sight of a major aspect of the authors' religious worldview, and to overlook their supernatural understanding of their adversities. The slanders, temptations, failures and violent attacks are considered a part of their mission as they battle against evil for the souls of the Amerindian people. They also constitute a part of the larger rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Relations*: the various forms of demonic attack are present, and intensify, in the martyrdom accounts themselves. To be aware of the authors' beliefs regarding the origin of these attacks is to comprehend how they later understood and constructed narratives recounting the murders of their fallen comrades.

CHAPTER FOUR

Naming the Other: The Authors' Use of *sauvages* and *barbares* in the Rhetoric of Martyrdom

1. Introduction

To honour me over the others, they tied me to two pieces of wood shaped like a cross [...] after having suffered this torment for about fifteen minutes, I felt that I was about to faint from it, which made me implore those *barbares* to lengthen my bonds a little. They approached me and, instead of lengthening them, they strain them more tightly, in order to cause me more pain. A *sauvage* from a more distant country, touched with compassion, broke through the crowd, and, drawing his knife, boldly cut all the cords with which I was tied.¹

In this excerpt from the 1647 *Relation*, Jérôme Lalemant includes Jogues' own account of the torture inflicted upon him during his first capture. Though both the early modern — and indeed the present day — reader might immediately be drawn to its painful details, our specific focus in this chapter is how the authors chose to describe the Amerindians involved in accounts such as these. Notice the use of two different terms: *barbares* (barbarians) and *sauvages* (savages). It is by no means unusual for missionaries to use either term; they were often used almost interchangeably by Europeans to describe the Amerindian peoples.

What is curious, however, is how Jogues chooses to differentiate their meaning. Notice that the Amerindians who ignore the missionary's plea for respite, and in fact tighten his bonds, are referred to as '*barbares*', while the Amerindian bystander who pities him and cuts him down is referred to as a '*sauvage*'. In this simple example, it would appear that the author fixes the term *barbares* to Amerindians who performed these pitiless acts and the term *sauvages* more generally

¹ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 80.

to the Amerindians who showed mercy. What makes this use of the two terms even more curious is that it is consistent, not only throughout this particular account, but also in six of the eight martyrdom accounts composed in this period. Moreover, after a close analysis of all the *Relations* printed between 1632 and 1650, I have discovered that these two terms are almost always distinguished by the behaviour of those to whom they are applied.² But this differentiation is applied not only to acts of pitilessness and mercy. The term *barbares* is also often used when the authors perceive behaviour that is selfish, foolish, simple-minded, untruthful, ill-mannered, licentious, animal-like, cruel, sadistically vengeful or murderous, whereas the term ‘*sauvages*’ is used either when referring generally to the Amerindians, or when they exhibit qualities such as patience, prudence, valour, docility, piety, family and tribal loyalty, and physical prowess. These facts leave us wondering about both the intention behind the authors’ use of these designations, and what informed the usage.

It is important first to grasp something of the larger Western understanding of the two terms and, specifically, how the French authors applied them in their writings concerning *Nouvelle-France*. The origins of the term ‘barbarian’ are found in Western antiquity. Used by the citizens of ancient Greece to describe those who could not speak Greek, by the fourth century BC, the word *barbaroi* (babblers) had acquired a distinctly pejorative meaning, also implying people who were foreign, culturally subordinate and intellectually inferior.³ For ancient philosophers such as Plato (423–347 BC), Aristotle and Cicero, true civilization originated in men of *recta ratio* (good reason), who together form a *polis* (city) governed by wisdom, bravery, sobriety and just laws, and who eloquently communicated their ideas with one another through a

² The designation ‘*sauvage*’ is used to generally describe the Amerindians 2872 times throughout the *Relations* examined in this study, while the designation ‘*barbare*’ is used 728 times – in every case applied as what appears to be a rhetorical device to identify specific behaviours that shall be outlined later in this chapter.

³ Harold C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 20–24.

common and well-developed language.⁴ Men described as barbarians were the antithesis of this vision, and were thought to be without any stable habitation, without reason or virtue and without true language or laws. Since membership in a *polis* that had all these qualities was considered part of truly being a man, the *barbaroi* were sometimes also thought to be somehow less than human.⁵

With the spread of the Roman Empire and then Christian culture, many of these ancient ideas of the barbarian were disseminated into Frankish culture. The term *barbares* is said to be found first in *l' Yistoire de li Normant*, by Amatus of Montecassino (c. 1308),⁶ in which the members of a foreign army are referred to as 'strangers to civilization' who speak with 'barbarous tongues'.⁷ The term appears again in the earliest known Franco–Latin dictionary compiled by the classical scholar Robert Estienne (1503–1559), who defines *barbares* as people 'who do not speak our language [...] men who are wild like goats, wolves, and other animals', incorporating into his definition a pejorative description by ascribing to them animalistic qualities. By the mid-seventeenth century, Antoine Furetière (1619–1688) provides a more detailed definition, defining the *barbares* as:

Foreigners from a country far away, savage, impolite, cruel, and who have different customs from ours. The barbarians several times pillaged Rome. The savages of the Americas are a kind of barbarian. The term barbarian also signifies those who are cruel, pitiless, unwilling to listen to either pleas

⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. by W. Rhys Waters (New York, 2004), I, 1355b; Plato, *Republic*, trans. by Robert Waterfield (Oxford, 1993), I, 477e; Cicero, *De inventione: de optimo genere oratorum*, trans. by H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, 1968), book I, 7.

⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. by Cames Lord (Chicago, 1984), 1260 a31; Cicero, *De inventione: de optimo genere oratorum*, I, 7; Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of the Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (London, 1982), p. 16.

⁶ Cf. *Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue françoise, avec les origines françoise de M. de Caseneuve, les additions du R. P. Jacob, et de Simon de Valhebert, le discours du R. P. Besnier sur le science des etymologies, et le vocabulaire hagiologique de M. l'Abbé Chastelain*, ed. by Gilles Mélangier (Paris, 1750); *Dictionnaire historique de la langue français*, ed. by Alain Rey, et al., 3 vols (Paris, 1992).

⁷ 'Les étrangers à la civilisation': Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, trans. by Prescott N. Dunbar (Woodbridge, 2004), book II, 26.

for pity or reason. In terms of their grammar, or language [...] unknown, impure, hard on the ear, or difficult to listen to.⁸

Here we see the etymologist describing the *barbares* as the ancients did, referring to them as ‘foreigners’ with different customs, who are unreasonable, impolite and speak an impure language. In addition, however, this definition illustrates that the French believed *barbares* to be ‘cruel’ and ‘pitiless’, adjectives we have already seen in Jérôme Lalemant’s application of the term. Moreover, we see that Furetière identifies the indigenous people of the Americas, the *sauvages*, as a subset within his general definition of all *barbares*.

The oldest known example of the term *sauvage* is found in a twelfth-century *chanson de geste* entitled *li coronemenz Looïs* (c. 1137), when referring to a ‘Saracen’ in Rome.⁹ This suggests that, at the beginning of its use in France, the designation implied non-Christian. *Sauvage*, like *barbare*, also appears in Etienne’s sixteenth-century dictionary, where he defines a *sauvage* as a ‘*quasi in syluis agens*’, and as wild.¹⁰ These two early examples taken together suggest that the term refers to wild people of the woods, without Christian religion. This combination reappears in Furetière’s definition, which describes the *sauvages* as:

Wandering men, who have no regular habitation, no religion, or any law or law enforcement. One finds savages in almost all of the Americas. Many savages are cannibals. The savages move about totally naked, are wild, and covered in hair, [...] They are not easily made docile, civilized or won over by reason.¹¹

These descriptions suggest that by the early modern period, French intellectuals had appropriated classical views of the *barbares* into their description of the Amerindians, whom they considered a particularly wild form of *sauvages*. When the two definitions are combined we gain a fuller picture of how the French generally understood the

⁸ *Dictionnaire universelle*, ed. by Antoine Furetière, 3 vols (The Hague, 1690), I, 45.

⁹ Yvan G. Lepage, *Les Rédactions en vers du couronnement de Louis* (Geneva, 1978), p. 384.

¹⁰ *Dictionnaire françois-latin*, edited by Robert Estienne (Paris, 1539), p. 32.

¹¹ *Dictionnaire universelle*, II, 97.

Amerindians: as *sauvages*, who are wild, hairy, wandering, uncivilized, unreasonable and often man-eating people of the woods who are also, as *barbares*, cruel, impolite, pitiless and unwilling to listen to pleas of mercy.

One could easily conclude that the authors of the *Relations* must have had a similar understanding of these two terms as their French contemporaries. These Jesuits, however, were not only influenced by the French understanding of *barbares* and *sauvages*; as we have already seen, they were also informed by observations made by their companions who had first-hand experience in the Americas. Sixty-two years before the first publication of the *Relations*, Acosta had proposed the first intellectual categorization of all Amerindians that, in turn, influenced his French co-religionists. In his *De procuranda indorum salute* (1570), the Jesuit missionary adapts Aristotle's description of human cultural advancement according to his experience in the missions of the *Indias Occidentales*. Though Acosta referred to all the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas as barbarians, he was the first Jesuit to place them into different categories of barbarity based on the ancient tripartite notion of human cultural advancement that we discussed earlier in Chapter One.¹² The first category included the advanced cultures of China and Japan, which had stable forms of republic, cities and laws, with sophisticated writing, pagan practice and human eloquence.¹³ The second consisted of cultures that had cities, laws and pagan practices, but no written language to preserve their civil tradition. And in the third group we find the '*salvajes*' (savages), who had no cities but were nomadic or forest dwellers, had no recognizable legal system or consistent religious practices, and had

¹² See: Chapter One, p. 77.

¹³ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute*, book I, nos. 60–63.

no written language. This group were often naked and crude, and sometimes cannibals.¹⁴

It is unmistakable that the authors of the *Relations* applied these two designations according to classical and French definitions, but combined them with Acosta's system of categorization. It might seem reasonable that, as Christian humanists and as members of the intellectual elite of early modern France, they simply followed the ideas of their contemporaries and conflated the terms *barbares* and *sauvages*, using them interchangeably within their texts. This explanation does not, however, explain why the authors appear so consistently to dichotomize the terms, ascribing distinctly different behaviours to each. There is another option to consider, however: that the authors' particular application of these terms was intentional, and was influenced not simply by their intellectual formation, but also by their religious experience. As we have already seen, the Jesuits' particular understanding of the human identity was not only rooted in their experience of the Catholic faith, but also specifically contextualized by their prayerful experience of the *Exercises*. The 'Principle and Foundation' in the early pages of the *Exercises* asserts that a human being is created to 'praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul'. In other words, it asserts that every human person is on the path to realizing his or her full human identity only when in a right relationship with God.

Within this particular religious worldview, the Amerindians were considered as human as any European, but their personhood was at the same time thought to be stunted, or perhaps incomplete. As we shall see, the authors believed that this was because they were disordered in their relationship with God and creation. Not only

¹⁴ Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute*, book 1, nos. 64–69.

were the Amerindians thought to be unaware of the Christian God, they were also believed to be seriously caught up in their material world. The authors therefore believed that it was only baptism that could ignite the Amerindian soul, and indeed their larger human culture, so that they could fulfil their divinely instituted human purpose to praise, reverence and serve God rather than his creation. It was hoped that the example of Jesus Christ would introduce them to a life of self-abnegation, in which they might willingly sacrifice their perceived over-attachment to personal desires, passions, food, material possessions, sex, retribution and violence in order to follow him.

It would seem, therefore, that the authors utilized the terms *barbares* and *sauvages* through this lens. The term *sauvages* is almost always used to refer to the Amerindians generally; but the authors also use it to describe observable characteristics that correspond to both ancient and specifically Christian ideals of human behaviour. By contrast, the term *barbares* is consistently used as a rhetorical device to extenuate described behaviours or circumstances that are considered to be contrary to these ideals. It would thus appear that the authors see in the Amerindian the best of humanity, yet often describe them as falling into behaviour that they considered *barbare*. This dichotomy is referred to often throughout the narrative, but Jérôme Lalemant captures it best, suggesting that when the Amerindian behaves like a *barbare*, we see ‘less of the human’.¹⁵ In other words, to be *barbare* is to reject one’s human identity as someone who follows God, in order to follow one’s own desires instead. Subsequently, the authors propose that the remedy for this spiritual delinquency is Christianity. In 1644, Vimont wrote, ‘There is no longer any barbarism

¹⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 32.

in these hearts, when love for the Cross dwells in them'.¹⁶ It is thus the Christian faith, and particularly a love for the crucified Christ, that is thought to allow the Amerindian to break free from all that might be *barbare* within them.

Once this dichotomy between the terms *sauvage* and *barbare* has been recognized, it becomes possible to conceive of the two terms as anthropologically identifying the Amerindians, within the authors' religious worldview, as being in a fluid stage of human development. The authors considered the Amerindians to be endowed by God with all of the laudable qualities of a human being. Yet, at the same time, they lacked both the personal and the larger cultural centredness on Christ that was considered necessary for them to mature in their human identities. Reciprocally, when Amerindians were described in the narratives as exhibiting qualities considered contrary to their divinely constituted human identity, the authors employed the term *barbares* as a rhetorical designation for the least humanity that they observed. Ultimately, this perceived lack of humanity was thought to originate in the decision of the Amerindians to embrace their own desires, rather than God's desire for them: behaviour we have already identified as being contrary to the authors' understanding of the created order of things. This fluid state of the Amerindians was in fact thought to be both temporally and spiritually dangerous. For without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in baptism, they were considered perilously vulnerable to their own passions, to the detriment of their human development and, finally, their immortal souls.

If this is the case, the rhetorical designations of *sauvages* and *barbares* can be understood as another example of the larger rhetoric of martyrdom that we are examining here. When the authors observe the Amerindians behaving in a way that

¹⁶ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 68.

reflects their ignorance of God, or appears to place their own desires before those of God, or even attack God, they call them *barbares*, living in a way contrary to their human identity. And the ultimate example of this denial of their humanity is exhibited in their torture and murder of God's emissaries, the Jesuit missionaries and their companions. Jogues' captors were therefore designated *barbares* for vengefully tightening his bonds, and inhumanly torturing a person who had come to preach Jesus Christ to them, with all the implications for their own growth in humanity. At the same time, the compassionate Amerindian is designated *sauvage*, since he allowed his natural human feelings of pity to overcome him, as he cut Jogues down. To understand this religious dimension behind the authors' use of the two designations is thus to understand their religious meaning throughout the narratives.

In this chapter, I shall begin by analyzing the ways in which the authors assert the human identity of the Amerindians, and then, in section three, I shall identify the virtues associated with them as *sauvages*. In section four I shall examine how the authors understood the Amerindians' behaviour, when described as *barbares*, to be rooted in their ignorance of the Christian God, and outline how the authors suggest that this can be corrected through baptism. Subsequently, in section five, I shall observe how the authors apply this religious worldview in the rhetoric of martyrdom articulated through their use of *sauvages* and *barbares*. I shall end with some conclusions that lead into our analysis of the martyrdom accounts in chapter five.

2. 'Truth in a Thousand Fables': The Human Origins of the *Sauvages*

Christopher Columbus's account of his first encounter with Amerindians in the New World spread rapidly across Europe. In this account, the explorer identified their innocent and kind natures, but he also described them as naked, living in the forests,

and practising cannibalism.¹⁷ It was largely these latter characteristics that sparked almost immediate debate among European scholars as to whether the Amerindians were in fact human. The Roman Catholic Church responded quickly to these debates. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI said in his bequest of the newly discovered lands to Spain, that all of the Amerindians were ‘peoples living in peace’.¹⁸ Again, in 1537, Pope Paul III promulgated *Sublimus Dei*, declaring that they were all human beings, that they had the right to be free from enslavement, and that ‘they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it’.¹⁹ In these promulgations, the Papacy concluded that, despite their different appearance, their strange customs and their unawareness of Christian God, these indigenous peoples were human persons.

Within the Christian worldview, this meant that all Amerindians, as human beings, had to be descendants of Adam and Eve. The difficulty in making this assessment was largely a question of honouring the content of the Genesis narrative of Judeo-Christian Scripture, while at the same time recognizing the immense geography that separates the ‘New World’ from the old. If the Amerindians were descendants of Adam and Eve, how did they end up an ocean away in the Americas?

One of the most innovative explanations for this came from Acosta. In his *Natural and Moral History*, he wrote:

The new world that we call the Indies is not completely divided and separated from the other world. And, to state my opinion, I came to the conclusion some time ago that one part of the earth and the other must join and continue, or at least that they come very close [...] If this is true, as indeed it appears to me to be, there is an easy answer for the difficult problem we have propounded, how the first dwellers in the Indies crossed

¹⁷ Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage*, p. 5.

¹⁸ James Muldoon, ‘Papal Responsibility for the Infidel: Another Look at Alexander VI’s *Inter Caetera*’, *Catholic Historical Review* 64 (April 1978), 153–336 (p. 182).

¹⁹ John Francis Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church* (New York, 1975), p. 75; Cornelius J. Jaenen, ‘The Image of New France: Real and Imaginary’, *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 32.2 (1994), 104–216 (p. 162).

over to them, for then we would have to say that they crossed not by sailing on the sea but by walking on the land.²⁰

The Jesuit's study of this issue had a broad audience that stretched to France, and ultimately to the authors of the *Relations*. Scholars have found similarities between Acosta's theories and those of various French authors.²¹ This is most obvious when reading the travel account of the early French explorer Marc Lescarbot (1570–1641) who almost exactly repeats the Jesuit's propositions, placing the ancestors of the Amerindians within the Genesis narrative.²² Unlike Acosta, however, Lescarbot concludes that, after the flood, Noah decided to build another ark that transported the Amerindians across the sea to their present lands.²³

The authors of the *Relations* similarly identify the *sauvages* as descendants of humanity's progenitors, and thereby acknowledge their humanity. In 1633, Le Jeune recounted one of the Amerindian creation narratives that mentions a great flood, and suggested that this account provided evidence that these people were linked to those of the great flood revealed in Scripture.²⁴ He thus linked them historically to Noah who, like all human beings in Scripture, was descended from Adam and Eve. Again, in 1637, when catechizing, Le Jeune informed an assembly of Amerindians that 'their nations had sprung from this family', but, since they had no written languages, this fact had been lost to the ravages of time in 'a thousand fables'.²⁵ In his explanation, Le Jeune not only described the Amerindians as descendants of Noah, but also began to construct reasons why, despite this lineage, they had forgotten about God. Unable to read or write, he suggested that the Amerindians simply wandered the earth for so long that they had forgotten who they were and, more importantly, the God who

²⁰ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, p. 63.

²¹ Lee Aldridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492–1729* (Austin, 1967), pp. 114–16.

²² Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris, 1617), pp. 19–28.

²³ Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, pp. 51–63.

²⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 77; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 44.

²⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 75.

created them. Only glimpses of their human origins had remained in ‘fables’ that survived over the millennia.

This perspective was also shared by Brébeuf, who believed that many of the Amerindians’ ‘fables’ reveal something about God, and by Jérôme Lalemant, who, in 1641, wrote that the Amerindians had not known God for some five thousand years.²⁶ In other *Relations*, Le Jeune proposed that it was God’s will for them to remain, for a time, unaware of their divine origins, but that now, with the arrival of the missionaries, God would create the space in their souls to believe in him.²⁷ He suggested that the ‘*sauvages*’ had no natural aversion to God, and were potentially docile and responsive to his divine will.²⁸ Furthermore, he argued that, despite claims to the contrary, they had the ability to receive, at the least, some ‘little ray of light or knowledge touching the Divinity’.²⁹ Indeed, several of the authors proposed that the ‘*sauvages*’ had a natural affinity with the Christian God.³⁰

The Amerindians were also described as having souls. The philosophical and theological training of the authors inclined them to make a clear distinction between vegetative and animal life, which was considered not to have an immortal soul, and human life, which does.³¹ And, clearly, the authors did not travel to *Nouvelle-France* in order to evangelize walking trees or wild, woodland, sub-human animals. In 1634, Le Jeune concluded that their ‘souls are all made from the same stock, and that they do not materially differ’.³² In 1635, it was decided by the missionaries that the

²⁶ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 85; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), p. 17.

²⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 116–17.

²⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 196–97, 203–04.

²⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 35.

³⁰ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 166, 203–04; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 85–86; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 95–96, 114; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 107; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), pp. 89–90; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 125–26; Lalemant *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 199.

³¹ Michael M. Pomedli, *Enthnophilosophical and Ethnolinguistic Perspectives on the Huron Indian Soul* (Lampeter, 1991), pp. 9, 13, 24, 27–32.

³² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 101.

Amerindians were to be instructed that they had an immortal soul, which could go to either heaven or hell.³³ Brébeuf, in 1636, wrote a chapter describing the beliefs of the ‘*sauvages*’ regarding what he referred to as ‘their souls’,³⁴ and in 1642 Jérôme Lalemant wrote that the ‘*sauvages*’ had souls destined for heaven, ‘as much in this barbarous country as in Europe’.³⁵ All told, the soul of the Amerindian was often referred to as the principal interest of the authors.³⁶

Beyond the recognition of their divinely constituted human origins and their immortal souls, the authors also praised the Amerindians for their visible human qualities. In fact, Le Jeune argued that the ‘*sauvages*’ appeared to be naturally good.³⁷ He also testified, in 1635, to the moral virtues they could exhibit, including love, community, generosity, and hospitality.³⁸ The ‘*sauvages*’ are also said to illustrate signs, by nature, of both patience and prudence.³⁹ They are praised for their sense of unity amongst themselves.⁴⁰ Finally, the Amerindians are said to be physically ‘beautiful’, perhaps a topos alluding to their moral beauty, and are described as ‘tall, erect, strong, well proportioned, and agile’, with a continence the authors even compare to that of Julius Caesar, and Pompey.⁴¹

The authors of the *Relations* thus used the designation *sauvages* while understanding that they were referring to human persons. Despite the controversies that might suggest otherwise, the *sauvage* was presented in the narrative as part of the human history described in the Bible and articulated through Catholic teaching. They

³³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 196.

³⁴ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 96.

³⁵ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1642–1643), p. 22.

³⁶ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 19, 41, 103; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 34, 49; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 96–98; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 117, 139; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 47; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 64, 76, 96.

³⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 106.

³⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 177.

³⁹ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 103; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 141–2; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 69.

⁴⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 104, 295.

⁴¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 19; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 27–28, 66, 100.

were therefore considered to be, like any other human being, descendants of Adam and Eve, who somehow moved away from the rest of Noah's progeny after the great flood of the world. The *sauvage* was said to have a soul and, more than this, a soul that might in some ways be in a greater state of purity than the souls of Christians, who for centuries had known about God yet still decided to disobey him. They were described as being good, sometimes virtuous, and as exhibiting noble, moral human behaviour.

3. 'There is no more barbarism in these hearts since love for the cross dwells within them': The Divine Nature of the Amerindian in the *Relations*, and their Human Development in Jesus Christ

The authors of the *Relations* still emphasize how the human identity of the Amerindian remains underdeveloped despite these perceived human virtues. In his 1638 *Relation*, Le Jeune briefly outlined what the Jesuits believed to be the overall dilemma: that 'superstition, error, and barbarism' seemed to reign in the land.⁴² If taken as a progression of ideas, the suggestion is that superstition (rather than Christian belief) leads to error, error leads to barbarism, and barbarism leads to sin. It is therefore the superstitious errors of the Amerindians that were thought to be the root problem. It was suggested that they lived in 'a night of error'.⁴³ The authors of the *Relations* often observed that the 'lights' provided by knowledge of God were not present to the unbaptized Amerindians but, instead, that they lived in darkness, ignorant of their divine maker. When reflecting on the *sauvages*, Le Jeune hoped that, 'Souls plunged in the error of night that has already lasted so long a time will finally see the light of Christian truth.'⁴⁴

⁴² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 2.

⁴³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 2.

⁴⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 2, 109.

This light imagery is thus a rhetorical trope that the authors used to intimate that ignorance of Jesus Christ leads to error and vanity. ‘How much dust is in their eyes’, Le Jeune lamented, ‘and how much trouble there will be to remove it, so that they may see the beautiful light of truth’.⁴⁵ Again, the chronicler, using an allusion to film that covered the eyes of St Paul (Acts 9:18), wrote: ‘this film that covers their sight seems to be growing thinner. Some day we shall see it fall, with great joy and benediction’.⁴⁶ The authors also suggested that there was simplicity of mind in those ‘*sauvages*’ who did not know God, and that their ignorance about God was like *pierres* (rocks) and *arbres* (trees) in the way of their salvation.⁴⁷ Without knowledge of God, Brébeuf believed that they had instead divinized material objects and, when these objects failed to provide spiritual substance for them, they were left discontented.⁴⁸ Jérôme Lalemant indicated that their perceived ignorance left them ‘crippled’.⁴⁹

According to the authors, this illusionary world of the Amerindians was fashioned by their consistent preoccupation with material needs at the metaphysical expense of their immortal souls. The Jesuits also saw in the Amerindians an often-unhealthy focus on survival and immediate gratification, and a lack of restraint, which they felt to be contrary to the religious worldview they were attempting to share. In his 1637 *Relation*, Le Jeune wrote that the idea of conquering one’s passions was, to many ‘*sauvages*’, ‘considered a great joke’; he perceived a great gulf between their apparently unrestrained behaviour and the boundaries that come from living a life

⁴⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 98.

⁴⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), introduction.

⁴⁷ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 71, 196; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 114; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 176; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 121–22, 145.

⁴⁸ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 108–09.

⁴⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), p. 94.

with God.⁵⁰ In 1643, Vimont decided that they ‘Hate to the utmost anything which in the least restricts their liberty’ and ‘find it very difficult to bend their necks to a yoke’.⁵¹

On one occasion, while attempting to evangelize a ‘sorcerer’ on the merits of placing the needs of the soul before the needs of the body, Le Jeune was left dumbfounded when the man replied, ‘Do not speak to me about the soul [...] that is something that I give myself no anxiety about; it is this (showing his flesh) that I love, it is the body I cherish; as to the soul, I do not see it, let happen to it what will’.⁵² The author then condemned his interlocutor to his face, saying ‘only dogs love their bodies [...] if you only love your body, you will lose both your body and your soul’.⁵³ It was believed that the Amerindians’ lack of interest in their divine origins, their souls and indeed the need for God in their lives created a ‘void of the knowledge of truth’, and consequently left them ‘overly occupied with thought of themselves’.⁵⁴ A year later, Le Jeune judged the Amerindians to ‘Have never been to any school but that of the flesh’,⁵⁵ repeating the charge that many were more interested in filling their stomachs than discussing the soul and eternal salvation.⁵⁶ In 1639, Jérôme Lalemant suggested that their greatest weakness was an inability to see beyond their immediate wants.⁵⁷ One Amerindian was even said to appreciate the Lord’s Prayer for its supplication, ‘give us today our food [...] give us something to eat’!⁵⁸

It was therefore presumed by the authors that Christianity would reorder the worldview of the *sauvages*, moving them away from their preoccupations with

⁵⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 191.

⁵¹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 114.

⁵² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 262.

⁵³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 262–63.

⁵⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 109.

⁵⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 83.

⁵⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 22.

⁵⁷ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 114–15.

⁵⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 82–83.

personal gratification and the material world, drawing them instead towards a life in Jesus Christ. The source of this presumption was not only their philosophical and theological training, but also their own personal experience of God. As we have already seen in previous chapters, it is undeniable that the authors were, throughout their adult lives, greatly influenced by their exposure to the *Exercises*, and we must keep this in mind when examining their writing in the *Relations*. Indeed, as we saw in chapter one, at least once a year each of the missionaries continued to pray with the *Exercises* while in *Nouvelle-France*.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the idea of the authors that a human person only truly discovers his or her identity in relationship with Jesus Christ is, in fact, the main proposition of the *Exercises*. It is outlined at the beginning of the text in what Loyola refers to as the Principle and Foundation:

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created. Hence, man is to use them in as far as they help [him] in the attainment of his end, and must rid himself of them in as far as they prove an hindrance to him.⁶⁰

This Principle and Foundation was considered by Jesuits of the early modern period, as it is to this day, to be the groundwork of the whole moral and spiritual edifice of the human person. It clearly proposes that the source of both human identity and human purpose is centred on God, and particularly on ‘our Lord’, Jesus Christ. It proposes that human beings were created by God to ‘praise’, ‘reverence’ and ‘serve’ their divine creator and that, in doing so, they will save their souls. All other non-human created things are secondary, and only helpful to human persons in as much as they ultimately lead them to God.

When describing, in 1647, his efforts to evangelize the Amerindians, Jérôme Lalemant actually paraphrased this section of the *Exercises*, proclaiming that ‘It is

⁵⁹ Cf. footnote no. 47.

⁶⁰ *SE* [12].

certain that all are created in order to know, to love, and to enjoy their God', and went on to hope that this could one day be the disposition of every 'sauvage'.⁶¹ While this hope remained unrealized, the authors continuously focussed on baptizing as many Amerindians as possible, believing that catechesis and baptism were the first crucial step in building a relationship with Christ. This relationship would move them away from a life that emphasized materiality, subsequently allowing them to grow as human persons.⁶² The idea that baptism provides a radical inner transformation in a human person is presented throughout the *Relations*, and reflects the view of Louis Lallemand who, as we have seen in previous chapters, had an enormous personal impact on the authors' appropriation of the *Exercises*.

He is said to have suggested that the spiritual nature of a person remains largely undiscovered without baptism: only baptism could offer a 'spiritual regeneration' able to free the individual from the consequences of the original sin of Adam and Eve. Furthermore, he proposed that it provided 'lights' and 'inspiration', which form the doorway into a mystical life bound to Jesus Christ.⁶³ Most importantly, Lallemand suggested that receiving the special form of the Holy Spirit in baptism provides the necessary metaphysical disposition for an individual to understand that it is not:

[...] From the senses, the passions, or from the mere reason, that we must take our direction, but solely from the Holy Spirit. Let us consider whether

⁶¹ Lallemand, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 210.

⁶² This approach to evangelization, presented throughout the *Relations*, was not the only model applied in *Nouvelle-France*. The Franciscan *Récollet* missionaries, who laboured among the indigenous peoples of Nouvelle-France until 1632, held the opposite view. Believing their existing culture, or perhaps lack of it, to be radically foreign to the Christian worldview, the Franciscans asserted that only after the *sauvages* had been introduced to aspects of French civilization could they appropriately embrace Christian doctrine. Cf. Louis Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane* (1683) trans. and ed. Marion E. Cross (Minneapolis, 1938). The Franciscan and the Jesuit methods were compared in the published travelogue by Louis Armand (1666–1716) where it is suggested that the former describe the *sauvages* as 'stupid', 'gross', 'rustic' and 'incapable of self reflection' while the latter describe them as having 'good sense', 'memory', 'vivacity' and 'good judgement': cf. Louis Armand, *Nouveaux voyages de M. Le Baron de Lahontan dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (1703), trans. and ed. by J. Bonwicke *et al.* (London, 1735), pp. 91–92. For further details on this point, cf. Jaenan, *Friend and Foe*, p. 51.

⁶³ *SD*, p. 221.

we allow ourselves to be governed by Him, and whether it is not the spirit of the flesh or of the world that governs us. If it be the Holy Spirit, we shall rejoice in the liberty of the children of God. If it be another spirit, we shall be the very slaves of that spirit, following its movements and its directions.⁶⁴

In other words, one can either find direction and freedom in a life united with God, or remain enslaved by desires for things in the material world.

The authors of the *Relations* also emphasized that this union with Jesus Christ would help the Amerindians to grow further in human virtues.⁶⁵ Referring to one Christian Amerindian, Le Jeune wrote, ‘Behold how grace operates in the heart of those we call *barbares*, or should I say children of God, for they are rendered so by baptism’.⁶⁶ He wrote of an ‘efficacy’ in baptism that transformed the perceived inconstancy of the ‘*sauvages*’.⁶⁷ Vimont declared that no barbarism can ultimately ‘resist the spirit of God’.⁶⁸ Jérôme Lalemant proposed that Christianity is a seed that will break the marble hearts of the ‘*sauvages*’.⁶⁹ Baptism was described by Le Jeune as a passage ‘from the extremes of barbarism and degradation into the bosom of glory’,⁷⁰ a movement from a so-called pagan and barbarous life to one that is Christian.⁷¹ It was said to bring wisdom to the mind of the *sauvage*,⁷² as well as a docility of spirit.⁷³ After baptism, the Amerindians were said often to manifest intensely the corporal acts of mercy, self-sacrificing love, compassion towards their

⁶⁴ *SD*, pp. 243–44.

⁶⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 29; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 69–70; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 44–45.

⁶⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 81–82.

⁶⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 19.

⁶⁸ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 50.

⁶⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 67.

⁷⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 19.

⁷¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 16.

⁷² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 25.

⁷³ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 44–45; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 54; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 113; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 16; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France-Hurons* (1642–1643), p. 172.

enemies and humility.⁷⁴ The authors even recorded these sentiments in accounts from various newly baptized Amerindians, who suggested that only by embracing the sacrament were they able to understand the world as it really was.⁷⁵ Le Mercier suggested that the Amerindians were transformed from wolves to lambs ‘When baptism clothes them in the grace of Jesus Christ’.⁷⁶ And, describing Amerindians who had embraced Christianity, he proposed: ‘There is no longer any barbarism in these hearts, since love for the Cross dwells in them.’⁷⁷

The religious worldview of the Jesuit authors, shaped by the *Exercices* and greatly influenced by the direction of Louis Lallemant, was thus radically Christocentric. It advocated that true self-discovery always involved self-abnegation, a denial of material things and a conscious union with God. As we have seen, the authors did not suppose that the Amerindians had a natural problem, but rather a supernatural one. They were considered no less human than any European, but were thought to lack what the authors considered to be the fundamental element necessary for them to grow in their human identity, namely a conscious and active relationship with Jesus Christ. Without it, and despite all of the noble qualities often ascribed to them, the *sauvages* were said to have a dangerous preoccupation with the material world that drew them away from their divine origins. The authors understood that it was through belief in Jesus Christ and baptism that the Amerindians could reach the fullness of their human potential in God. The term *sauvages* in the *Relations* does not place the Amerindians outside what defines a human person. Nor does it only refer to

⁷⁴ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 47; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 60; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 103–04; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 104; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 99–100; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France/Hurons* (1642–1643), p. 172.

⁷⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 15–16; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), p. 25; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 25; Lallemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), p. 79; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), pp. 30–31.

⁷⁶ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 16.

⁷⁷ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 68.

their cultural differences from Europeans, their living conditions or aspects of their behaviour that were often considered deplorable. It also, and perhaps most importantly for the authors, anthropologically identified them, within a particular religious worldview, as *in potentia* and ready to grow all the more as human persons, through a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ.

4. ‘Where we see less of the human’: The Rhetorical Designation of *Barbare* throughout the *Relations*.

Throughout the *Relations* we have studied, we have seen that the authors apply the term *sauvages* as the default way of referring to the Amerindian peoples they encounter. We have also found that this designation reflects the authors’ ideas of the Amerindians, nuanced by their French *milieu* as well as by Catholic teaching and the experience of their *confrère* Acosta. Furthermore, we have seen how this designation is applied, through the particularly Christocentric religious worldview of the authors, to associate the *sauvages* with the idea that all human persons need ultimately to focus their lives on God to grow in their personhood. Without God, the *sauvages* are left in a precarious place between who they are and who they are meant to become.

In the introduction to this chapter, it was suggested that the term *barbares* was used rhetorically to identify the Amerindians when their behaviour dramatically reflected the proverbial bad fruits of this spiritual dilemma or, as Jérôme Lalemant suggests, when the Amerindians behaved in a deplorable manner believed to illustrate the ‘least of the human’. This behaviour is identified when they make choices according to their own passions, fixated on materiality rather than on God’s desires for them and the afterlife.⁷⁸

In this section we will see how the authors used ancient ideas about the barbarian and about human development as well as the Christian ideal of self-

⁷⁸ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 32.

abnegation as touchstones to assess the human state of the Amerindians and to identify when they appeared to behave in ways that abandoned their humanity. As we shall see, the authors looked for ancient ideals of *recta ratio*, stability and government. When they were seen to reject those ideals, the Amerindians were believed to be rejecting a part of their human identity and were thus *barbares*. Additionally, when the authors perceived the Amerindians to be immodest, repetitively impolite, habitual liars, horribly cruel or practising cannibalism, they regarded this as selfishness, looking to satiate their own desires rather than attempting to honour God's. The authors saw the practice of brutal torture and cannibalism as a radical form of self-satisfaction in which the Amerindians ritually took another life to bring greater comfort and security to their own. Similarly, when the Amerindians were thought to be consciously rejecting the evangelical message of the missionaries, or when they attacked it verbally or through violent behaviour, they were also identified as *barbares*. In this they were attacking God's invitation to embrace him and to accept what the authors regarded as the fundamental part of their human identity.

The ancient ideal of human development, rooted in reason, eloquence and socio-political stability, that we examined in the introduction was transcribed in the medieaval period into western Christendom through the assimilation of classical philosophy, but with one radical addition, namely, that for any human person to flourish in these ideals, his or her life must be rooted in Jesus Christ.⁷⁹ This meant being baptized, and thereby being 'born again' into the *congregatio fidelium* (John 3:3–21). And, still keeping much of the original definition, by the time of Pope Gregory the Great (540–604), the term 'barbarian' generally referred to those who

⁷⁹ Pagden, *The Fall of the Natural Man*, p. 19.

had yet to embrace the Christian religion.⁸⁰ This Christian reworking of ancient ideas about barbarians and human development is present both in the earliest French accounts and in the *Relations* as a point of reference or touchstone when attempting to understand the Amerindians. The first French explorer in the Americas, Jacques Cartier, is quoted as saying: ‘These are savage people living without a knowledge of God and the use of reason.’⁸¹ In his early writings, Samuel de Champlain suggested that the Amerindians had no political system and no religion,⁸² and, as early as 1555, the explorer André Thevet had written:

America is inhabited by marvellously strange and savage people without faith, without laws, without religion, without any civilities, but living like unreasoning beasts as nature has produced them, eating roots, men as well as women, remaining ever naked until perhaps such time as they will be frequented by Christians.⁸³

All these references suggest that both the early explorers and the later settlers were looking for the ideals of reason, stability and law in the cultures of the Amerindians, and their initial articulations of this culture undoubtedly shaped perceptions of the matter in France.⁸⁴

The adoption of these ancient ideas about the barbarian and about human cultural development coincided with both the early modern French interest in the classical period of Greece and Rome and their understanding of the *sauvage*. Scholars such as Jean Bodin (1530–1595) and Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) associated the savage with the lost land of Plato’s *Arcadia*⁸⁵ and an ancient Golden Age that was considered to be ‘a primordial time of peace’, when the earth naturally yielded all the

⁸⁰ Pagden, *The Fall of the Natural Man*, p. 20.

⁸¹ Jaenan, *Friend and Foe*, p. 42.

⁸² Biet, *Voyage de la France equinoxiale en l’isle de Cayenne*, p. 361.

⁸³ André Thévet, *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique, autrement nommée Amérique et de plusieurs terres, et isles decouvertes de nostre temps* (Paris, 1555), p. 51.

⁸⁴ Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l’Amérique Française* (Paris, 2005), p. 81.

⁸⁵ Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage*, p. 51.

people's needs for a life of 'rustic innocence and simplicity'.⁸⁶ Missionaries who had visited *Nouvelle-France* before the Jesuits also applied these ideas to the Amerindians. Franciscan Gabriel Sagard-Théodat (1590–1640), for example, wrote:

They have no lawsuits and take little pains to acquire the goods of this life, for which we Christians torment ourselves so much, and for our excessive and insatiable greed in acquiring them we are justly and with reason reproved by their quiet life and tranquil dispositions.⁸⁷

In their early intellectual formation, the Jesuit authors were influenced by some of these same ancient ideals. The writings of Cicero were a mandatory part of their grammatical and rhetorical training, and both Aristotle and Plato were studied in as much as their views coincided with Christian theology.⁸⁸ In Le Jeune's 1632 *Relation*, written only days after his arrival to *Nouvelle-France*, he specifically described the Amerindians as being like 'Grecian philosophers who would wear nothing they had not made themselves'.⁸⁹ Again, in his 1634 *Relation*, Le Jeune observed the Amerindians feasting and wrote: 'It seems to me that in the golden age we did it like this.'⁹⁰ In the same *Relation*, Le Jeune wrote that a local captain roused his warriors with a great speech so 'fine' and 'delicate' that it might have just as easily come from the lips of Aristotle or Cicero.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Richard Heinberg, *Memoires and Visions of Paradise: Exploring the Universal Myth of a Lost Golden Age* (Los Angeles, 1989), p. 282.

⁸⁷ Gabriel Sagard-Théodat, *Histoire du Canada et voyage que les Frères Mineurs recollet y ont faiets pour la conversion des infidelles* (Paris, 1636), p. 192.

⁸⁸ A detailed description of the Jesuit's formal exposure to these classical authors is outlined in the *Ratio Studiorum Societatis Iesu*, e.g.: Cicero: 'Common Rules for Professors in the Lower Classes', no. 353; 'Rules for Professors in the Humanities', nos. 395 and 398; 'Rules for Teaching Highest Grammar Class', [410] and [414]; 'Rules for Teaching Middle Grammar Class' [415, 416, 418, 420, 421, 424]; 'Rules for Teaching Lower Grammar' [426, 428, 430, 431]. Aristotle: 'Rules for the Professors of Philosophy', [208]. Plato: 'Rules of the Professors of Rhetoric', [13]; 'Rules of the Professors of Humanities', [9].

⁸⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 137.

⁹⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 138.

⁹¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 129.

The authors often suggest that the Amerindians show signs of superior intelligence that manifests itself in their *recta ratio*, or good reason.⁹² In his 1634 *Relation*, for example, Le Jeune argues, ‘With regards to the mind of the *sauvage*, it is of good stock’.⁹³ Both Le Jeune and Jérôme Lalemant refer to them as ‘reasonable creatures’, or ‘capable of reason’.⁹⁴ Le Jeune points out that the Amerindians always require reasonable explanations before accepting any ideas from the missionaries.⁹⁵ And their children are said to have a high degree of natural reason.⁹⁶ This quality of reason is often identified in the *Relations* through the rhetorical skill of the Amerindians— again, a quality of advanced culture emphasized by Cicero and Aristotle. In fact, Le Jeune not only compares their skill to that of Cicero, but also suggests that, through the ongoing development of their already superb rhetorical eloquence, the *sauvages* may yet even surpass him.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, when the authors witness examples of unreasonableness in the *sauvages*, they often employ the rhetorical designation of *barbares*. For example, in 1637, Le Jeune wrote:

It is customary for *barbares* Captains to wish that others may bear them company at their departure from life, going so far that sometimes they send one to kill another Captain to go with them into the other world. These ignorant people, full of malice, readily imagine that we share their detestable ideas.⁹⁸

The designation is also used when the *barbares* are thought to show no interest in learning what the missionaries wish to teach them, but instead remain ‘cold like

⁹² Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 101, 102–03, 173, 186–87; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 252–53; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 121; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 58; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 36; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 140–41, 151; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 111; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1642–1643), p. 94.

⁹³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), 101.

⁹⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 111; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 189.

⁹⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 186–87.

⁹⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 140–41.

⁹⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 118–19.

⁹⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 211–12.

marble' and not at all 'curious'.⁹⁹ It is used when the Amerindians are described as being 'governed by their passions rather than reason',¹⁰⁰ when they are considered to be in serious error;¹⁰¹ and when the authors feel that they have no concern for eternal life and ignore the possibility of God's existence.¹⁰² Finally, it is employed when they are considered to be ignorant for not accepting baptism.¹⁰³ When taken together, these instances form a pattern: the Amerindians are referred to as *barbares* when their perceived rationality is considered to be blocked by their own desires, and therefore fails to comprehend the truth that is being proposed to them by the missionaries. When they follow their own rituals, when they show no interest in Christianity, when they fall into serious error that makes them behave cruelly, when they ignore teaching on heaven or hell, reject baptism or deny the possibility of the Christian God, then they are called *barbares*.

The authors also place enormous significance on the migratory customs of the Amerindians, believing, as the ancients did, that stability is an important part of human development. Indeed Le Jeune, in his 1637 *Relation*, outlines for the reader Aristotle's vision of human cultural development so as to make this idea clear:

It was the idea of Aristotle that the world had made three steps, as it were, to arrive at the perfection, which it possessed in his time. At first, men were content with life, seeking purely and simply those things that were only both necessary and helpful for its preservation. In the second stage, they united the delectable with the necessary, and propriety with necessity. First they found food, and then its flavour. In the beginning, they shielded themselves against the severity of the weather, and afterwards grace and beauty were added to their garments. In the early ages, houses were made for their utility, and afterwards to be appreciated. In the third stage, men of intellect, seeing that the world was enjoying things that were necessary and pleasant in life, gave themselves up to the contemplation of natural objects and to natural

⁹⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 19; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 114–17.

¹⁰⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 290–91.

¹⁰¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 2.

¹⁰² Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 113–14; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 58–59; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 94–95; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), pp. 13–14.

¹⁰³ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 113–14; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 51–52, 168; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 102; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), p. 5; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), pp. 144–45.

philosophy; whereby the great republic of men has little by little perfected itself.¹⁰⁴

This passage illustrates that Le Jeune was aware of Aristotle's understanding of human cultural development, which he was applying to the Amerindians he encountered. It also illustrates that he considered the Amerindians to be at the first stage of Aristotle's three-stage process, namely that of practical conservation. It is therefore logical that he would expect the Amerindians to place a priority on their material needs.

The interest in geographic stability is expressed in the *Relations* in two different ways. Most importantly, the authors suggest that to be in a constant state of wandering and hunting in the forest is ultimately a sign of selfish sloth. They also believe that stable peoples can be more easily taught about Christianity, whereas migrant peoples are never in one place long enough to receive proper instruction.¹⁰⁵ In his 1635 *Relation*, for example, Le Jeune bemoans the difficulty of convincing certain Amerindians to remain in one place, and to cultivate the land, and he even dates their nomadic practices to biblical times, proposing that they are perhaps descendants of Cain, who was cursed to wander the world.¹⁰⁶ In the same *Relation* he also suggests that both the temporal and spiritual poverty of the Amerindian lies in the fact that they are not sedentary.¹⁰⁷ In 1636, he writes that migrant Amerindians spend an enormous amount of time 'tramping' all over the country, erecting tents.¹⁰⁸ They 'resemble

¹⁰⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 164–65. These three stages of forming the political community are not specifically articulated as a single united formula in the *Politics*, though Le Jeune clearly extrapolated them from the text. Interestingly, Jean Aubonnet made a similar effort to synthesize Aristotle's views on the matter. See: Aristotle, *Politique*, edited and annotated by Jean Aubonnet (Paris, 1960), pp. 107-8.

¹⁰⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 26; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 40; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 72; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 67–68.

¹⁰⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 153.

¹⁰⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 78.

¹⁰⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 242.

migratory birds’, he writes in 1637, constantly on the move, and unpredictable.¹⁰⁹ Rather than settling, they prefer to live their lives with an idleness characteristic of animals.¹¹⁰ In his 1641 *Relation*, Jérôme Lalemant refers to the Nipissing Amerindians as ‘poor wandering sheep’,¹¹¹ while, Vimont communicates his joy in that fact that the missionaries are discovering more sedentary groups of Amerindians to evangelize — again illustrating the authors’ preference.¹¹²

When the authors begin to explain the reasons for the migratory nature of the Amerindians, concluding that it is based on certain weaknesses in their natures, the designation *barbares* is applied. For example, in his 1635 *Relation*, Le Jeune writes that ‘these poor *barbares* have for a long time been accustomed to idleness’, and are therefore not willing to work at establishing a permanent settlement.¹¹³ The designation is used when referring to them as *errans* (wanderers) and *vagabons* (vagabonds).¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the instability of the *barbares* is linked to perceived inconstancy, cowardliness and treacherous behaviour.¹¹⁵ In his 1639 *Relation*, Jérôme Lalemant writes that the Jesuits’ evangelical efforts are greatly hindered by the *barbares*, who are ‘lazy to the last degree’, and unwilling to work the land.¹¹⁶ The authors thus associate ‘idleness’, aimless wandering, inconstancy and ‘cowardliness’ with their migratory behaviour, suggesting that the Amerindians are choosing to prioritize their immediate desires over the long-term benefit of being sedentary, and when this is described, the authors refer to them as *barbares*.

¹⁰⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 25.

¹¹⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 69.

¹¹¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), p. 94.

¹¹² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 194.

¹¹³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 102.

¹¹⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 68.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 77–78; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 75; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 15–16; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 137.

¹¹⁶ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 15–16.

Brébeuf, in his 1636 Relation, focussed in more detail on the legal structures that developed from this way of life. Referring to the Hurons, he wrote that:

In view of the perfect intelligence that abides among them, I am right in maintaining that they are not without laws. They punish murderers, thieves, traitors, and sorcerers. And, with regards to murderers, although they do not preserve the severity of their ancestors towards them, nevertheless the little disorder there is among them in this respect makes me conclude that their procedure is scarcely less efficacious than is the death penalty elsewhere.¹¹⁷

He therefore judged the *sauvage* to have some basic laws that form a simple structure of legal compensation and corporal punishment. Brébeuf's belief that the current generation of *sauvages* was less brutal in exacting punishment than their ancestors had been was no doubt an example of the missionary's effort to illustrate that native culture, in some small way, appeared to be progressing naturally in a positive direction according to ancient ideas on the matter, even without any knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Despite these observations, the authors also see a certain kind of lawlessness in all the Amerindians, rooted in their desire to live freely according to their individual desires. Again, when they see this sort of behaviour, they use the designation *barbares*. When suggesting that the Amerindians are ultimately interested in satisfying their own personal desires, rather than obeying any common law, Le Jeune writes:

The *barbares* have the law of a wild ass [...] They do not know what is meant by bridle or bit. With them, to conquer one's passions is considered a great joke, while to give free rein to the senses is a lofty Philosophy. The Law of our Lord is far removed from this dissoluteness; it gives us boundaries and prescribes limits, outside of which we cannot step without offending God and reason.¹¹⁸

Not only does this passage illustrate a link between uncontrolled passion and lawlessness; it also suggests that the 'law of the Lord', or the Christian faith, presupposes a contrary way of life, in which one's passions must be tempered. The

¹¹⁷ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 149.

¹¹⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 191.

authors again refer to the Amerindians as *barbares* when they believe them to prefer living in a state of unbridled passion, and to find the Christian laws proposed to them an impassable constraint.¹¹⁹

Two years earlier, Le Jeune had expressed his aspiration for the Amerindians of *Nouvelle-France*, foreseeing that

New France is about to experience the blessings of the mother country; and right, triumphing over injustice, will cause these countries to cease being what they have been for so many centuries, boundless forests, the abode of *barbarie*¹²⁰

Here suggesting that the land is filled with *barbarie* because it is full of ‘injustice’ (*de l’injustice*). Le Mercier questions the decisions of the Huron regarding their use of corporal punishments and restitutions, observing that ‘through the process of justice, if there can be any among these *barbares*’, they leave much to be desired.¹²¹ Notice that he links the observed ‘lawlessness’ of the Amerindians to their lack of self-control or ‘restraint’, and a perceived penchant for surrendering to these passions makes them *barbares*.

In each of these last three cases, the authors apply the designation *barbares* when they perceive the Amerindians to allow their own desires or passions to guide their actions. The Amerindians are reasonable, yet they are referred to as *barbares* when they cannot comprehend, or choose to ignore, the teaching of Christianity taught to them, which demands restraint and a life focused on God. They are usually described as *sauvages* when the authors imagine the possibility of their settling down into stable communities, but are referred to as *barbares* when it is believed that millennia of ‘inconstancy’ and ‘laziness’ continued to prevent it. The Jesuits recognized signs in Amerindian culture of political stability, yet they are referred to as

¹¹⁹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 114.

¹²⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), pp. 1–2.

¹²¹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 5.

barbares when their ‘passions’ appear consistently to override that stability. In these examples, *barbares* is used to identify their perceived failure in a metaphysical struggle to grow in their human identities. Though they have shown signs of *recta ratio*, the ability to settle, and a form of government, they often lack personal self-control and a driving force to motivate them beyond their passions so that they might fully embrace these human qualities.

These ancient ideals that the authors sought in the *sauvages* are joined by their French ideals of what defines civility. In his thesis entitled *Christianization and Civilization in Seventeenth-Century French Colonial Thought*, Peter Goddard illustrates how the evangelization of the *sauvages* and their eventual ‘civilization’ were connected.¹²² Of particular value to our study are the links that he draws between curbing inordinate human passions through living a Christian life, and the civil behaviour that is expected to follow. He suggests:

Specifically Christian measures of *civilité* demanded that the individual work to ‘*dompter ses passions*’ [temper their passions]. These passions, and their exterior manifestations (expressiveness, sensualism, emotionalism, etc.) offended God. Missionaries and reformers called for a strong measure of repression. Mastery of instinctual expression was regarded as central to the process of conversion.¹²³

Here he suggests that, though entry into the Christian life and the idea of so-called *civilité française* were linked, it was believed by many contemporaries that one could not master one’s passions without God, and that without that mastery, full civility was impossible.¹²⁴ And if we return to Furetière’s dictionary, as Goddard suggests, the definitions of *civilité* and *civiliser* illustrate this particular marriage of Christianity and French civility. Furetière defines *civilité* as having ‘an honest manner, gentle polished

¹²² Peter A. Goddard, ‘Christianization and Civilization in Seventeenth-Century Colonial Thought’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1990), p. 5.

¹²³ Goddard, ‘Christianization and Civilization’, p. 8.

¹²⁴ This early modern French idea is articulated best in Antoine de Courtin, *Nouveau traité de la civilité qui se pratique en France parmi les honnestes gens*, 6th edn (Paris, 1682); and in Jean Baptiste de La Salle, *Les Règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne*, ed. by Pierre Seyer et al. (Rouen, 1778).

behaviour' and the ability to share in conversation, proposing that to be civilized is to be honest, gentle, polite and at ease in conversation with others.¹²⁵ Interestingly, when he defines *civiliser*, he writes that it is to 'to render civil and polite, courteous. The preaching of the gospels civilized the barbaric peoples, and those most savage'.¹²⁶ Here again, the link is made between the receiving of Christian doctrine and the civility of a people.

This proposition that to be civilized is to be in control of one's passions through faith in Christ or the idea of self-abnegation, is consistent with the religious worldview of the authors of the *Relations*, formed through the *Exercices*, that one's human identity can only advance when it is detached from all material things and centred on Christ. Accordingly, the authors believe that the Amerindians, without Christ, remained slaves to their passions. Vimont suggests that the *barbares* only have affection for 'flesh and blood', suggesting that their perceived material needs always take priority over their spiritual ones.¹²⁷ In his 1635 *Relation*, Le Jeune writes that the *barbares*' greatest interest is in 'eating and drinking'; in 1637 he writes that among the *barbares*, to 'Satiare their passions is a high philosophy, according to themselves all that their senses desire'.¹²⁸ Le Mercier writes that only a '*peuple barbare*' (barbarous people) would consider the selfish act of suicide to ease their suffering.¹²⁹ And Le Jeune writes that a *sauvage*, close to death, asked the priest to free him from his preoccupation with 'the flesh and the blood that keeps him in this barbarous life'. Their focus on immediate needs and the

¹²⁵ Original: '...maniere honneste, douce et polie d'agir, de converser ensemble': *Dictionnaire universelle*, ed. by Furetière, vol. 1.

¹²⁶ Original: 'Rendres civil et poli, traittable et courtois. La predication de l'Evangile a civilisé les peuples barbares les plus sauvage' *Dictionnaire universelle*, ed. by Furetière, vol. 1.

¹²⁷ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), pp. 34–35.

¹²⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 166 ; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 191.

¹²⁹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 38–39.

material world was thought to be so pervasive that it seemed almost impossible to discuss the afterlife.¹³⁰

When describing what awaits any missionary who would come to *Nouvelle-France*, Le Jeune writes: ‘In short, let them bear in mind that they are leaving France, a country full of comfort and politeness, to come to a country of *barbares*’.¹³¹ In one instance, an author writes that the missionaries feel the need to withhold baptism from a number of *barbares* whose greatest anxiety ‘is about eating and drinking, and not about learning’.¹³² Jérôme Lalemant suggests that many of their daily social customs are ‘*desbauches*’ (debaucheries) and ‘*barbares*’.¹³³ Le Jeune, with a touch of humour, even uses the rhetorical designation when referring to their flatulence:

These barbarians give full liberty to their stomachs and to their bellies; to make whatever sounds they please, so as to relieve themselves. As to the odours that are then exhaled in their houses, they are stronger than the perfume of roses, but not so sweet.¹³⁴

The authors will refer to the Amerindians as *barbares* when they are bad-tempered, appearing to be more concerned about themselves than those with whom they are speaking.¹³⁵ They are to be feared in anger since ‘when *barbares* are angry, they are dangerous, and cannot be restrained’, lost to their passions.¹³⁶ The designation is also used when describing behaviour exhibited by the Amerindians that appear treacherous, subtle, crafty and self-serving, that is to say, untruthful.¹³⁷ The authors often refer to the Amerindians as ‘*barbares*’ when they are thought to be caught up in their sexual desires, and thereby promiscuous and willing to change their spouses

¹³⁰ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 51–52.

¹³¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 122.

¹³² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1635), p. 22.

¹³³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), p. 13.

¹³⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 140.

¹³⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 208; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), pp. 19–20; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 15.

¹³⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 102–03.

¹³⁷ Cf. Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 28; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), 178, 179–80; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 110–11.

when it is convenient for them.¹³⁸ And they are referred to as ‘*barbares*’ when they are thought to have rejected Christianity out of cowardice – unable to surmount the social pressures put on them to do so.¹³⁹

The authors also use this rhetorical designation when they describe the perceived violent tendencies of the Amerindians. Le Jeune refers to them at one point as *toutes barbares*, since they are constantly engaged in petty wars with one another.¹⁴⁰ The designation is also regularly applied to Amerindians who threaten missionaries in the field. In his 1638–1639 *Relation*, Le Mercier designates them as *barbares* for contemplating the death of Brébeuf.¹⁴¹ In 1639, Jérôme Lalemant describes the constant ‘*disgrâces*’ (indignities) that the missionaries suffer at the hands of ‘*barbares*’.¹⁴² When a small retinue of missionaries has to flee a village, an insolent band of young men pursuing them, hatchets in hand, are again referred to as *barbares*.¹⁴³ In 1641, Jérôme Lalemant writes that ‘I would greatly lengthen this chapter if I attempted to set forth here in detail all that the Fathers were compelled to suffer from these *barbares*’.¹⁴⁴

The rhetorical designation is also employed when referring to Amerindians who attempt to sabotage the evangelical project of the missionaries. In his 1637 *Relation*, Le Jeune refers to one Amerindian man who was opposed to offering youth from his village for a new seminary project as a *barbare*.¹⁴⁵ Jérôme Lalemant informs the reader in 1639 that various *barbares* have suggested that not practising their traditional rituals is destroying

¹³⁸ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), pp. 85, 117, 118–19; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 66, 75; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 32–33, 92–93; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 54–55, 115; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), p. 51; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640), pp. 90–1; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 45; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 103–04; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), pp. 54–55; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 52.

¹³⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 77–78.

¹⁴⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), p. 20.

¹⁴¹ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637–1638), pp. 26–27.

¹⁴² Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 103–04.

¹⁴³ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 179–80.

¹⁴⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1640–1641), p. 43.

¹⁴⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 180.

the nation,¹⁴⁶ and in 1640, that the *barbares* are ‘adamantly resolved to our ruin’.¹⁴⁷ The words ‘spoken against the missionaries’ by one ‘*barbare*’, are described as being like ‘bad sounds’, which is to say cursed words.¹⁴⁸ Again, in the same publication, Jérôme Lalemant writes that the inhospitality of a village towards one missionary is because ‘These poor *barbares* are possessed by demons’;¹⁴⁹ suggesting that an elder is a *barbare* for speaking against the Jesuits in the village. The authors also apply this rhetorical designation specifically to the Iroquois, who became official enemies of the French in 1609 and are later described as the torturers and murderers of eight missionaries.¹⁵⁰ Throughout Le Jeune’s contributions as an author of the *Relations*, he repeatedly refers to the Iroquois as *barbares*.¹⁵¹ Later in the narrative, this designation continues, and the Iroquois are said to be ‘*barbares*’ because of their constant warlike behaviour that is governed by stealth, cruelty (*crauté*) and impatience (*impatience*), and since they make war (*font la guerre*) in the manner of the ancient Scythians (*Scythes*) and the Parthians (*des Parthes*).¹⁵² They are also designated *barbares* for setting up ambushes to kill the French.¹⁵³ In each of these cases the rhetorical designation *barbares* again emphasizes behaviours considered contrary to human virtues and a rejection of human qualities. Often it is also a rejection of the Jesuits who are attempting to evangelize, by

¹⁴⁶ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 168.

¹⁴⁷ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 76.

¹⁴⁸ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 79.

¹⁴⁹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 155.

¹⁵⁰ In an attempt to build relations with the Wendat, Algonquin and Montagnais tribes, the then governor Samuel de Champlain (fulfilling this role between 1620–35) agreed to support these peoples in their ongoing wars against the Iroquois. This resulted in what is commonly referred to as the ‘Beaver Wars’ or ‘Iroquois War’, which continued until the ‘Great Peace of Montreal’ was concluded in 1698. Cf. Daniel Bar, *Unconquered: The Iroquois League at War in Colonial America* (Westport, 2006).

¹⁵¹ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1633), pp. 38, 249; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1634), p. 117; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), pp. 2, 102, 238–39; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 5, 28, 52, 88–89, 122, 155, 222; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), pp. 2, 6, 33, 34, 59, 63, 68, 77, 94, 124, 180, 183, 191, 226, 231, 233, 282, 296, 300.

¹⁵² Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 290; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 138–39; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), p. 159; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 4, 159; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 268–69; Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 209.

¹⁵³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1640–1641), pp. 212–13.

which the Amerindians are rejecting God, who the authors consider to be the ultimate need of any human being.

Above all else, however, the rhetorical designation *barbares* is used when the Amerindians manifest what the authors believe to be the greatest evidence of their lack of self-abnegation: their practice of ritual torture and cannibalism. The authors of the *Relations* offer the readership detailed accounts of torture that, in general, consist of seven basic elements. First, the practice of ritual torture is committed on prisoners of war to avenge the deaths of warriors lost in battle.¹⁵⁴ Second, the ritual is designed to deter the enemy from attempting battle in the future.¹⁵⁵ Third, the ritual is generally under the control of war captains or elders among the Amerindians.¹⁵⁶ Fourth, all members of the village, including women and children, are encouraged to participate in the ritual.¹⁵⁷ Fifth, all warriors accept that their capture will result in torture; so, when captured and tortured, they often sing a pre-prepared song to manifest their courage.¹⁵⁸ Sixth, the prisoner is stripped naked and often ordered to sing and dance while being tortured with brands, embers, and hot metal over the entire body.¹⁵⁹ Seventh and finally, the prisoner is killed in front of the entire community.¹⁶⁰

These descriptions are often followed by condemnation from the authors, who emphasize the cruelty of the Amerindians involved, believing them to be rooted in their personal desire for vengeance. In Le Jeune's 1632 *Relation*, for example, he

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 35, 49; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 273; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 23, 26, 39, 40; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 64.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 244–45, 246–7; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 23; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 4–5.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 7–8, 46–47; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 39–40.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 23; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 39–40.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 21, 48–49; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1641–1642), p. 127; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 219–20; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 24; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 163–64.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 21–22, 23; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 158–60; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 13–14, 22–25, 40, 44–45; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 165–71; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 72; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 13–14.

¹⁶⁰ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 22, 47–50; Cf. Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 51–52.

writes that the torturers ‘make them suffer all the cruelty that the devil can place within them’.¹⁶¹ Struck by the Amerindians’ apparent lack of compassion for a tortured prisoner, the missionary explains to the reader that, ‘when sufferers cried out, all the others cried even louder, in order that the groans should not be heard, and that no one might be touched with pity’.¹⁶² Brébeuf describes the torture rituals of the Amerindians as ‘cruel’, and hopes that they will disappear with the introduction of Christianity.¹⁶³ Le Mercier refers to the ritual that he observed as ‘the excessive cruelty of man’.¹⁶⁴ Both Vimont and Jérôme Lalemant call the ritual torture ‘the ordinary cruelty of the country’.¹⁶⁵

Even more scandalous for French society than torture was the practice of cannibalism among the Amerindians. Sagard witnessed some Hurons giving cooked pieces of a prisoner to their children, and subsequently wrote in 1636 one of the first known French accounts of their cannibalism.¹⁶⁶ That same year, Le Jeune recorded, in detail, the ritual torture and consumption of a prisoner in Nouvelle-France. The Amerindian tore out their prisoner’s nails with their teeth, burned his privy parts and, ‘In the end, as a final horror, devoured them half-cooked’.¹⁶⁷ Le Jeune even records instances where young children were fed the roasted hearts of their enemies.¹⁶⁸ Over the period of our study, the authors recorded multiple accounts of ritual cannibalism. There were the examples given within various torture accounts from Le Jeune,

¹⁶¹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 24.

¹⁶² Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 47.

¹⁶³ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 159. Note : Though torture was indeed practiced in early modern France [see: Lisa Silverman, *Tortured subjects: pain, truth, and the body in early modern France* (London, 2001)], here the authors are troubled by the way it has been integrated into Amerindian life as a ritual, and that it includes all levels and persons of their society.

¹⁶⁴ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 22.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), 87; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 96.

¹⁶⁶ Gabriel Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (1636), trans. by George M. Wrong (Toronto, 1939), p. 161.

¹⁶⁷ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 23–24.

¹⁶⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 50.

Brébeuf, Le Mercier, Vimont and Jérôme Lalemant.¹⁶⁹ Then, there were also additional accounts of Amerindians being particularly keen to consume the heart and the blood of an especially brave prisoner.¹⁷⁰

Very soon after French society had received reports on cannibalism among the Amerindians of Brazil, Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) responded in his essay, *Des Cannibales* (1580), by comparing the Amerindian practice of cannibalism with the various forms of torture practised in Europe:

I conceive there is more barbarity in eating a man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a body limb from limb by racks and torments, that is yet in perfect sense; in roasting it by degrees; in causing it to be bitten and worried by dogs and swine (as we have not only read, but lately seen, not among inveterate and mortal enemies, but among neighbours and fellow-citizens, and, which is worse, under colour of piety and religion), than to roast and eat him after he is dead.¹⁷¹

What appeared to make the Amerindians' practice of cannibalism somewhat tenable for Montaigne was the fact that it seemed to be done to enemies captured in battle, and that their forms of torture were altogether less cruel than those used by Europeans during the French Wars of Religion — a point often made by historians today.¹⁷² This opinion would appear to be supported by Le Jeune's observation that Europeans should not be astonished by the behaviour of the Amerindians since, 'Before the faith was received in Germany, Spain, or England, those nations were not more civilized'.¹⁷³

Furthermore, the Jesuit missionary made a consistent link between the cannibalism of the Amerindians and their cultural practice of retribution:

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 23–24, 50; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 159; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 53; Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 53; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), pp. 89–90, 158–60; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), pp. 157, 160–1; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), pp. 4–5; Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 170–71.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 158; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642), p. 169.

¹⁷¹ Michel de Montaigne, 'On the Cannibals', in *The Essays*, trans. and ed. by Martin A. Screech (London, 2004), p. 404.

¹⁷² Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: 1968), p. 269.

¹⁷³ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 26.

They are so enraged against anything that hurts them, that they eat the lice and other vermin that they find upon themselves, not because they like to eat them, but only to avenge themselves by eating those who eat them.¹⁷⁴

He even suggested that ‘Canadians think of nothing but living and seeking vengeance on their enemies’.¹⁷⁵ This need was so strong that, in one instance, he witnessed a group of Amerindians first exhume the body of a dead enemy and then mutilate it, only to ‘give it to their dogs’.¹⁷⁶ The authors’ various explanations reflect the contemporary understanding of the Amerindians’s need to satisfy their desire for retribution.¹⁷⁷

The authors thus understood the ritual torture and eating of someone else to be ultimately self-serving, since it was meant to bring about retribution for the loss of life, to ease the pain of one Amerindian by inflicting pain on another, to reassert power over someone by cooking them as a meal or to digest their qualities into oneself. It therefore seems logical that the rhetorical use of the designation *barbares* that we have seen in so many other circumstances of self-satisfying or passion-filled behaviour would also apply to the Amerindians involved in these rituals. In 1632, Le Jeune witnessed Amerindians feeding pieces of a tortured body to their children, and wrote: ‘Behold a strange act of barbarianism’.¹⁷⁸ In his 1637 *Relation*, Le Jeune referred to another incident of ritual torture, and feeling pity for the victim, he explained

What cruelty was not exercised upon this poor wretch, by the wives of those who a little while before had been killed in the country of the *Iroquois*. Father Buteux has written to me the whole tragic story, describing the *barbarie* of these tigers.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), pp. 24–25.

¹⁷⁵ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 28.

¹⁷⁶ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 35.

¹⁷⁷ Jean-Baptiste du Tarte, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français*, 2 vols (Paris, 1667), I, 357; Louis Hennepin, *Nouvelle découverte d'un très grand pays situé dans l'Amérique, entre le Nouveau Mexique, et la Mer Glaciale*, 2 vols (Utrecht, 1698), I, 47–48; Pierre Esprit Radisson, *Relation du voyage fait par le Sieur Pierre Esprit Radisson au nord de Canada pour la Compagnie Royale de la Baye de Hudson en l'année 1684* (Québec, 1684), pp. 20–21.

¹⁷⁸ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1632), p. 50.

¹⁷⁹ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), p. 277.

Here again, the rhetorical designation is associated with ‘cruelty’, ‘murder’ and animal-like behaviour. In the 1636 *Relation*, Brébeuf described in detail the ritual practice of eating the dead body of a tortured prisoner. ‘There are those who eat it with pleasure’, he suggested, though hoping that ‘Knowledge of the true God will totally banish this barbarity from this country’.¹⁸⁰

In Le Mercier’s detailed and well-studied account of torture in 1637, the same rhetorical designation is used, but with much greater frequency.¹⁸¹ Startled by the kindness of the victim’s torturers, who first prepared a feast to honour the victim before his coming trials, the author suggested that their apparent generosity was only in proportion to the barbarity of the torture that was to follow.¹⁸² Adamant that the prisoner should be baptized before his death, Le Mercier hoped that the sacrament would offer him some repose amidst such a ‘*nation barbare*’. Le Mercier wrote of the torture:

You have to be there to see a living picture of Hell. The whole house appeared as if on fire and, through its flames and the dense smoke that issued from it, these *barbares*, crowding one upon the other, howling at the top of their voices, with firebrands in their hands, their eyes flashing with rage and fury. It seemed like so many demons who would give no respite to this poor wretch.¹⁸³

In this account, the author links the rhetorical designation *barbares* not only to the inhuman behaviour of the Amerindians, but also to an apparent feeling of demonic presence in their actions. When the torturers ask the prisoner if he had suffered enough, and he says that he has, Le Mercier remarks how the ‘*barbares*’ disagreed and began the ritual again.¹⁸⁴ The author goes on to explain how the missionaries

¹⁸⁰ Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), p. 159.

¹⁸¹ The details of this account have been the foci of several noted historians who have attempted to understand Amerindian torture rituals. Cf. Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, pp. 73–75; Tooker, *Ethnography of the Huron Indians*, pp. 34–38; and Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural Symbol* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 125–50.

¹⁸² Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 26.

¹⁸³ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 40–41.

¹⁸⁴ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 46.

present attempted to evangelize the Amerindian's torturers, again referring to them as the '*barbares*'.¹⁸⁵ The following morning, the torturers escorted the prisoner on his last walk towards the scaffold where he was to die: once again Le Mercier refers to them as '*barbares*'.¹⁸⁶ Finally, he informs his readers that he later passed a '*barbare*' carrying one of the dead man's half-roasted hands on a skewer, and bemoans the state of 'a country as barbaric as this one'.¹⁸⁷

5. Conclusion

As we have seen, the authors of the *Relations* looked at the Amerindians through the lens of their religious worldview. Through their own personal experience of the *Exercices*, they understood human persons to be created by God, and believed that both knowledge of and a relationship with their Creator was fundamental to the human identity. The Amerindians were considered to be at a crossroads in their ongoing human development, and it was the Christian faith, through baptism, that was believed by the authors to be the impetus that would propel them further along the right path of life. This understanding was shaped by the Jesuits' intellectual and religious formation. The authors, applying ancient classical and early-modern Christian ideals of human identity, looked for reason, stability, and laws, as well as an honest manner, gentility, and politeness, among the Amerindians. When they were not found, the authors believed their absence was rooted in the Amerindians' perceived ignorance of the Christian God, and the rhetorical designation of *barbares* was usually applied. For instead of attempting to shape their lives around Jesus Christ, they believed that the Amerindians were often caught up in their desire for things in the material world: governed by passions rather than reason, lazy and idle rather than stable, and unwilling to let laws curb their appetites. This perceived lack of self-

¹⁸⁵ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 50.

¹⁸⁶ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), pp. 51–52.

¹⁸⁷ Le Mercier, *Hurons* (1637), p. 53.

control often dashed the authors' expectations of honesty, politeness, and gentleness in the *sauvages*, finding instead lies, debauchery, lust, violence, sabotage, torture, and murder. Thus the rhetorical designation of *barbare* represents not only a failure to live up to both ancient and early-modern Christian ideals, but, most importantly, reflects decisions in the *barbares* that reject their human identity, and in their supposed selfish state, remain undisposed to offer themselves to God.

CHAPTER FIVE

‘His Death Crowned his Life’: The Rhetoric of Martyrdom In Finals Acts of Love¹

1. Introduction

In 1649, Ragueneau, the superior of the mission to the Hurons, faced the great challenge of reporting in his *Relation* the turmoil that faced the mission under his care. Amidst the spread of disease that was decimating the Amerindian peoples, the escalating number of Iroquois victories and, soon afterwards, the abandonment of the principal mission at Sainte-Marie, located in the heart of the Huron nation, what hope could he offer his readership?

More than these, however, there was the gripping account that Jogues wrote of his first imprisonment among the Iroquois, and that of Goupil, in 1642 whilst returning from Québec with much needed supplies for the mission; recounted by Vimont in his 1642-1643 *Relation* and then again by Lalemant in 1647. In it, Jogues describes how they were stripped, marched from village to village as trophies of war, beaten with clubs all along the way, maimed, and disfigured. Though his captors, for making the sign of the cross over a sick little girl soon axed Goupil in the head, Jogues was held captive for over a year – living in a deplorable state – only escaping with the help of Dutch traders who pitied him. Making it back to France in 1643, he heroically volunteered to return to *Nouvelle-France* in 1644, and in 1646 was chosen as a peace envoy to labour among his former torturers. And, only hours after his

¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 85.

arrival, eyewitnesses reported that Jogues was once again tortured, along with his lay companion de la Lande, and both had their heads split open with an axe.²

Daniel, in 1648, was seen wearing his religious vestments and lifting up a large cross, charged an invading Iroquois party so as to provide a chance for the women and children of his village to escape. Riddled with bullets, he was stripped, and died of his wounds.³ Unwilling to abandon their fellow Christians, Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant were captured that same year during an Iroquois attack of the Huron village of St. Louis. Dragged to the already captured village of St. Ignace, Amerindian Christian witnesses testify that they were stripped naked, beaten with clubs, tied to posts, and flailed. Burning axe tips were joined into necklaces that were put around their necks. Lalemant's eyes were gouged out, and replaced with burning coals. Brébeuf's lips were cut off. Both were scolded by boiling water that was poured over them in derision of the baptismal ritual. And, finally, after both had died, their hearts were torn from their chests and consumed by several warriors who had participated in the torture ritual.⁴

In 1649, Garnier was shot during an Iroquois raid of his mission village. Preaching of God's love and mercy as Iroquois warriors encircled his church, the priest, bleeding to death, was last seen alive attempting to offer the sacrament of

² News of the deaths of both Jogues and de Lalande were reported to Charles de Montmagny (1599-1664), the Governor of New France, in a letter written by Willem Kieft (1597-1647) – who Lalemant refers to, as the 'Governor of the Dutch'. In this correspondence, both the reasons for, and the details of, their deaths are described as having been told to him by Amerindians who witnessed the events. Subsequently, the letter is quoted directly in the 1647 *Relation*, and the author uses its content, along with further eyewitness accounts from two Amerindians who had escaped capture with Jogues, to construct their narrative of the martyrdoms. Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 127-8.

³ In creating a distraction before the oncoming Iroquois warriors, Daniel successfully allowed various women and children to either hide or escape. It was some of these Amerindians that Ragueneau claims to have witnessed the missionary's death, and it is their testimony that he uses to write about it in the *Relations*. Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648-1649), p. 12.

⁴ At the end of Ragueneau's account he informs the reader that his facts about the deaths of Brébeuf and Lalemant come from 'persons worthy of credence, who have seen it, and reported it to me personally, and who were then captives with them', referring to Amerindian Christians who had been captured with the missionaries but, 'having been reserved to be put to death at another time', were able to escape and inform the priests of what had happened. Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648-1649), p. 52.

reconciliation to a dying Amerindian Christian.⁵ While, as we have already seen, that same year, Chabanel fell to the ground in exhaustion running from a war party. Urging his fellow companions to find safety, he was left behind, and presumed to have died in the forest of the land he had vowed never to leave.⁶ Jogues' attestations of gruesome torture and death, his own death, and the various recorded accounts of Amerindian Christians who witnessed the brutal murders of their priests, could have understandably snuffed out the authors' impassioned religious ardour.

And yet, in his necrology of Brébeuf, the longest serving and best-known Jesuit in the mission to have died, Ragueneau proclaimed that, in fact, 'his death crowned his life'. That he could make this claim, surrounded by failure, war and death, reveals in a profound way both the very heart of the religious worldview that shaped the authors of the *Relations*, and how this worldview was enshrined throughout the narrative by its rhetoric of martyrdom. The deaths of the missionaries were seen not as failures but as the crowning moments of a way of life rooted in self-abnegation and annihilation, in which they lovingly offered all of themselves to Jesus Christ. Consequently, their authors saw the martyrdom accounts as the climax of the narratives, in which the divine, the missionaries, the devil and the Amerindians met one last time and, in the religious imagination of the authors, their cosmic battle for souls reached its climax.

⁵ Garnier's death is said by Ragueneau to have been reported to him personally by a 'good Christian woman' who had witnessed these events just before she was struck unconscious by an Iroquois warrior and left for dead. Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649-1650), p. 31

⁶ Those Christians who escaped are said to have reported their last sight of Chabanel to Ragueneau. Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649-1650), p. 56.



This print presents a pictorial narrative of the martyrdoms of Isaac Jogues, Antoine Daniel, Jean de Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Noël Chabanel, Charles Garnier, René Goupil and Jean de Lalande, as well as two Amerindian Christians murdered for their steadfast allegiance to the Jesuit missionaries. It is the first known representation of the martyrs of its kind in France, and is found in François du Crux's *Historia Canadensis* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1664). Courtesy of the Bodleian Library.

Each element in these accounts is presented according to the roles that we identified in the preceding chapters of this study. God is the one whose will is to be followed, who invited the missionaries into the deadly environment of *Nouvelle-France*, and whose embrace involved a share in the suffering of his crucified Son. The missionaries, living out their 'second conversion', freely entered into the land of crosses, always seeking, through self-abnegation, to be filled all the more with God and to be led all the more by the divine will. Those who embraced torture and death were said to have understood their martyrdom as a gift from heaven, the fullest expression of a life of self-annihilation and self-offering to God. And, more than any other means at their disposal, they believed that this would save both their own souls

and those of the peoples they served. Satan and his demons, ever opposed to the efforts of God and his missionaries in *Nouvelle-France*, are said to have agitated the minds of the Amerindians and to have provoked in them a surrender to their passions of rage, frenzied pleasure and brutality, as they stripped, tortured, maimed and killed their prisoners in a final effort to eliminate the meddling servants of God from his 'empire' in the New World. And, finally, the Amerindians, human persons who would find their fulfilment as Christians by offering themselves to their true Creator, are said in this instance to have radically turned in on to themselves. Lost in their self-centredness and their desire for self-gratification, they inflicted the greatest possible suffering on the missionaries as they practised their rituals of torture and death. Nevertheless, in this role they are presented as wielding a double-edged sword. For the *barbares'* acts of extreme selfishness when they killed the missionaries were believed by the authors to contribute to the ultimate 'salvation' of the Amerindian peoples. As the missionaries willingly accepted these torments out of love for Jesus Christ and completed their sought-after union with him, they were believed to provide graces for the land that would ultimately move the hearts of the Amerindian peoples towards a life in God.

In this chapter, we shall see that as these horrific dramas unfold in the narratives, the authors employ the rhetoric of martyrdom that we have studied throughout *Relations*. First, in section two, I shall show how it is stressed in several of the accounts that the missionaries' ability to accept torture and death is the result of their general disposition always to discern and to follow the divine will of God. In section three, I illustrate how the authors associate this disposition with their efforts at self-offering. Said to have all the more diminished themselves so that God would be increased in them, they are taken, stripped and consumed, or even vanish. The divine

reception of this offering, examined in section four, is presented in the accounts not only as an acceptance by God but, in some ways, as an orchestration by the Creator, the so-called ‘author of all afflictions’: acts of providence, a divine gift, even a means of purging them of past sins. Beyond these perceptions, however, in section five, our study reveals that at the heart of this rhetoric of martyrdom lies an expressed belief that each missionary did not ultimately embrace death, but rather embraced Jesus Christ crucified and, in doing so, somehow mystically shared in the suffering and death that were part of his life. They are described as having both sought and achieved a deeper union with God by sharing in his suffering in a way that, according to their religious worldview, is an inevitable element of choosing to be in union with the divine.

This union with Christ crucified, examined in section six, is presented in the martyrdom accounts, and throughout the *Relations*, as bearing great fruits, while the martyrs themselves are presented as extraordinarily heroic. Some are described as having premonitions, others as having mystical dreams, and still others as being able to speak to the Amerindians in a way that brings about countless conversions just before they die. The sacrifice of each man, it is suggested, will have a major impact on the overall evangelical mission, and form the bedrock of the new Church in *Nouvelle-France*.

In section seven, I shall examine how the authors reinforced their belief that the mission was actively opposed by the devil by their association of the word ‘demon’ with the martyrs’ torturers. Finally, in section eight, we shall see how the authors’ use of the designation *barbare* – when describing actions of the Iroquois captors – not only reiterates its association with a selfish or self-centred, non-Christian disposition, something less human than it could be, but also acts as a

powerful literary foil to the disposition of self-sacrificing love embodied by the missionaries. While the *barbares* are presented as cruelly torturing and eating their captives, the missionaries, focused on obeying the divine will, patiently accept these violent assaults, seeing them as an opportunity to embrace the suffering Christ in an act of total self-annihilation, both out of love for God and out of a desire that their torturers, and all Amerindians, should themselves be saved.

In these accounts, the described roles of the divine, the missionary, Satan and the Amerindians incorporate, in its fullest expression, the rhetoric of martyrdom found throughout the *Relations*. It was the authors' profound belief that, in *Nouvelle-France*, it was the will of God that the evangelical mission of the Jesuits and their companions was to be fully realized in a loving union with Christ crucified, for the sake of those they had come to serve. The rhetoric that shaped their authors' pens throughout the narratives was now presented as being fully realized, written out for the readership in, as it were, the blood of their martyr confrères who had fully actualized what was thought to be the divine will.

2. Seeking the Divine Will in the Martyrdom Accounts

Articulated in several of the martyrdom accounts, as indeed it is throughout the *Relations*, the first principle of the authors is their belief that a person's decisions in the face of suffering and death flow from the divine will. As we have seen, the *Exercices* locate 'seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of one's life' as the central purpose of every person.⁷ In their prayerful encounter with the text, each Jesuit in *Nouvelle-France* understood himself to be invited to 'will and not will as God our Lord inspires them, and as seems better for the praise and service of the

⁷ SE [1].

Divine Majesty’,⁸ and then to ‘Make a Choice of A Way of Life’ that corresponded to the will of God, always seeking ‘divine confirmation’.⁹ The goal was to offer, out of love, their wills to God and, in return, to act out the divine will throughout their lives.¹⁰ This ideal was enhanced by their exposure to the spiritual school of Louis Lallemant, which reiterated that all Jesuits ‘Ought to have within ourselves and for ourselves a most perfect life by a constant application of our understanding and will to God’.¹¹

In several of the martyrdom accounts, and the subsequent necrologies that are included in them, the authors make an effort to indicate that the men who had died had held the same disposition in life. In Jogues’ letter to the governor Samuel de Champlain, included by Vimont in the 1642–1643 account of Jogues’ first imprisonment among the Iroquois, the missionary instructs the Governor that he should not let ‘regard for us prevent you from doing that which is to the glory of God’: no rescue attempts should be made, since it was God’s will that he be captured, and that should always take precedence over the wishes of any person.¹² After his escape, Jogues is said by Jérôme Lalemant to have expressed to a fellow Jesuit that to have been ‘all alone in the midst of a depraved nation without Mass, without sacrifice, without Confession, without Sacraments’ was extraordinarily difficult, but bearable since following ‘[God’s] holy will and his sweet command are well worth that’.¹³ And in his final necrology in the 1647 *Relation*, he is said to have acted like a ‘child’ when asked to do anything by his superiors, whom he believed to stand in the place of God,

⁸ *SE* [153–5].

⁹ *SE* [169–188].

¹⁰ *SE* [234].

¹¹ *SD*, p. 182.

¹² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 254.

¹³ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 122–23.

and to have ‘obeyed the least in things lawful, however humble they were [...] when it was a question of the glory of his master’.¹⁴

Ragueneau expressed himself in a similar way in Brébeuf’s necrology, that with a ‘child’s simplicity’ he saw ‘God in the person of his superior’ and showed a ‘docility to the answers which were given him’, for he knew that ‘God sought the true obedience’.¹⁵ He is described as having been so caught up in his love for God that ‘often he felt this love as a fire’ which consumed any ‘impurity of nature’ within him, and caused ‘the spirit of grace and the adorable spirit of Jesus Christ to rule in him’.¹⁶ Ragueneau suggests that Garnier held a similar disposition towards the divine will, writing:

He attached himself neither to his work nor to persons, to places nor employments; but, regarding equally in everything the will of God, wherever he might be; whatever occupation obedience might appoint to him, from that very moment he betook himself to it with courage and constancy, and as a man who had no other thought in the world save that of finding God.¹⁷

According to Ragueneau, ‘neither his heart nor his countenance ever appeared troubled’ when faced with adversities or failures, expressing instead a ‘great peace of mind’, since there was always in him a ‘perfect conformity of his will with that of God’.¹⁸ And in the necrology of Gabriel Lalemant, Ragueneau quotes the young missionary as saying that every person should be willing to sacrifice his or her life for Jesus Christ, so as ‘blessedly to cast himself away, in order to accomplish faithfully what [he] judges to be your [God’s] will concerning him’.¹⁹

3. Abnegation, Self-Annihilation, and the Divine Will in the Martyrdom Accounts

¹⁴ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 141–42.

¹⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 72.

¹⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 70.

¹⁷ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 45.

¹⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 48.

¹⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 54.

As we have already seen both in chapter one and earlier in this chapter, the Louis Lallemand school suggested that in order to discover and to live out the divine will, a person's own desires, affections and inclinations must be set aside, or indeed annihilated.²⁰ Like Christ himself, whose life of self-emptying is the 'model of humility' for all, it proposes that, just as the Lord abased himself by entering the world as a helpless child, so too each person must seek out a 'sincere contempt for self', in which 'self-love', 'ambition', success and 'esteem' are rejected, and 'self-annihilation', 'self-abnegation' and the 'abjection' or contempt of others are embraced out of love for God.²¹ This wish continuously to strip away the desires of the human will, so as to embrace the divine will, is an aspect of the rhetoric of martyrdom that comes to its fullest expressions in the martyrdom accounts.

In Jogues' own account of his first capture, included by Jérôme Lalemant in his 1647 *Relation*, the veteran missionary, feeling overwhelmed by the 'perils of hell' that surrounded him 'on all sides', wrote that to quell this onslaught, 'I should fix my thoughts upon the goodness of my God, and cast myself entirely upon his bosom'.²² He understood that he must detach himself from his own fears and turn instead to the embrace of God. In doing so, he claimed that this 'banished my vexations, and threw me into a fire of love'.²³ In the same letter, Jogues suggested that his torture, imprisonment and the threat of death constantly presented to him 'new opportunities for dying to myself and uniting myself inseparably to him'.²⁴ And in his necrology Jogues is praised for having always 'desired to be treated according to his nothingness', and for having 'really had so low an opinion of himself that he could

²⁰ SD, pp. 6–7, 84; Olier, Introduction to the Christian Life and Virtues, p. 228.

²¹ SD, p. 84.

²² Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 101.

²³ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 101–02.

²⁴ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 125.

not speak thereof but with contempt'.²⁵ Moreover, he is described as a man who 'clings to neither life, nor health, nor the world', and who is 'satisfied with God alone'.²⁶

In the brief accounts of the death of Goupil, a similar emphasis on detachment and self-annihilation is found. Vimont chooses to introduce the young layman by placing him within the larger context of youth in France who, according to the author, often 'dragged their miserable lives into vices'.²⁷ Instead, Goupil, described as a 'gallant surgeon', is said to have dedicated his 'life, his heart, and his hand to the service of the poor *sauvages*'.²⁸ He possessed a 'fire' and 'ardour' that disposed him to offer his blood for Jesus Christ, and his life demonstrated the 'purity of an angel'.²⁹ And in the description of his martyrdom, we find an association between his willingness to sacrifice the comfortable life of a surgeon, with all of the potential 'vices' that might accompany it, and his 'angelic' state as a humble servant of the Amerindian people in *Nouvelle-France*; willing to offer his blood to Christ.

In his account of the death of Daniel, Ragueneau emphasizes this same disposition towards self-annihilation. When Iroquois warriors overwhelmed his village, it is said, he could have taken flight; but 'forgetting himself [he] remembered some old men and sick people, whom he had long ago prepared for Baptism'.³⁰ Eventually, he ran into his church, where many villagers had sought refuge. Whilst baptizing some, hearing the confessions of others, and generally attempting to console his parishioners, Daniel told them to flee but, for himself, he said: 'I must face death here, as long as I shall see here any soul to be gained for Heaven; and, dying here to

²⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 134–35.

²⁶ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 142.

²⁷ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 274.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 290.

³⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 10.

save you, my life is no longer anything to me.’³¹ Daniel is thus described as utterly detached from his own material life. Though a battlefield surrounded him and his own life was in great danger, these things were forgotten and instead, in that moment, his priority was to baptize as many Amerindians as possible. This priority was indeed his own but, more importantly, it was also a part of what he believed to be the divine will, having been sent to *Nouvelle-France* to fulfil the mission that God had initiated.

Ragueneau also describes this detachment from what many would call the natural human inclination towards survival in his account of the martyrdoms of Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant. He writes that both men, ‘for love of God and neighbour’, had exposed themselves to a cruel death, even though they could have escaped, because they were filled ‘with love for God rather than for themselves’.³² Furthermore, as he writes in the necrology of Brébeuf, when a ‘humiliation befell him’, the missionary ‘felt it an inward joy’, believing that, ‘whatever low place he might be, he always saw himself higher than he wished’.³³ Indeed, even his mystical experiences, which we have already examined, he kept ‘secret’ and ‘concealed’ from everyone but his superior, so as ‘to esteem himself the least of the household’.³⁴ Finally, Ragueneau chronicles that when Brébeuf was asked how he would feel should he be captured and stripped by the enemy for torture, he replied that it would not be a repugnant end, for ‘then I should not think of myself, but of God’.³⁵

Ragueneau similarly quotes Gabriel Lalemant as having said that the goodness of God requires ‘that a man sacrifice himself’ and ‘blessedly cast himself away, in order to accomplish faithfully what he judges to be your [divine] will concerning

³¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 11.

³² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 45.

³³ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 77.

³⁴ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 71. See: Chapter Two, pp. 114-5.

³⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 82.

him'.³⁶ In the 1649–1650 account of the martyrdom of Garnier, Ragueneau describes him, too, as 'dead to the world', and the world was to him as some 'lifeless carcass, for which one feels only horror and disgust'.³⁷ He is said to have possessed a great disposition towards 'humility' and to have sought 'whatever would produce in him a greater loathing of himself'.³⁸ Ragueneau emphasizes the missionary's desire 'always [to] lay on the bare ground' and to bear 'constantly upon his body some portion of that Cross which during life he held most dear, and on which it was his desire to die'.³⁹ He suggests that Garnier's only ambition was to serve the will of God and the Amerindian peoples; 'Outside of these considerations, nothing in the world affected him [...] God was his all and, apart from him, all else was to him as nothing';⁴⁰ 'In his work, he truly sought God, and not himself'.⁴¹

This emphasis on self-abnegation is perhaps nowhere more elaborately expressed than in the martyrdom account of Chabanel, in which Ragueneau struggles to explain how this Jesuit died in an act of self-offering to God, when all his fellow missionaries knew for certain was that he had disappeared. Though the author begins by speculating that Chabanel could have 'fallen into the hands of the enemies [and] he may have died, partly from hunger, partly from cold, at the foot of some tree at which weakness had obliged him to halt,' he ends by claiming that the missionary was likely murdered by a lapsed Christian Amerindian.⁴² Ragueneau describes Chabanel's time in *Nouvelle-France* over seven pages, focusing particularly on his constant struggle with the look, smell, habits, food and living conditions of the Amerindian people, his on-going failure to learn their languages (despite the fact that he had been a professor

³⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 54.

³⁷ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 36.

³⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 38–39.

³⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 39.

⁴⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 42.

⁴¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 48.

⁴² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 57–58.

of languages and rhetoric in France) and the fact that no missionary was really afforded any time alone, but always had to live, as the Amerindians did, in open spaces surrounded by families, animals and the incessant smoke of their fires.⁴³ According to Ragueneau, the response of Chabanel to this constant struggle was, on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1647, to make a ‘vow of stability’ in which he swore to God, before the Blessed Sacrament, never to leave the missions.⁴⁴ His response to unbearable conditions was to attempt to remove from his will any personal desire he might have to leave them and to commit himself all the more to God’s desire that he labour among the Amerindian peoples. He was thus later described in the account as being an inspiring example of a ‘victim’, who ‘immolates himself’ before his God, with little thought of his own life.⁴⁵

With this disposition in the mind, we can perhaps better understand the meaning of the authors’ description of five of the six murdered Jesuits being stripped of their clothing, either at the beginning of their torture or immediately following their deaths. In his account of Jogues’ first capture, Vimont writes that he was ‘stripped of his shirt’. Later he is said to have passed the winter ‘with a single red cape for all his clothing’, his nakedness covered only by what the author describes as a blanket in the colour associated with martyrdom.⁴⁶ In a second, and inconsistent, explanation of Jogues’ ordeal, it is written that his torturers ‘stripped him, leaving him only his shirt’.⁴⁷ Jérôme Lalemant, in his account of Jogues’ first capture, writes that he was stripped ‘as bare as a hand’,⁴⁸ while Ragueneau writes that in Daniel’s case too, ‘They

⁴³ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 58–61.

⁴⁴ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 62.

⁴⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 64.

⁴⁶ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 242–43.

⁴⁷ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 304.

⁴⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 63.

stripped him naked' and 'exercise[d] upon him a thousand indignities'.⁴⁹ Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant are similarly described as having been 'stripped naked'. Ragueneau writes that after Garnier had taken a musket ball to the chest, 'The *barbares* who had fired the shot stripped him of his cassock', and left him, weltering in his blood, to pursue the other fugitives.⁵⁰ Since, as we have seen in chapter four, it was part of the Amerindian torture ritual to strip prisoners naked, the stripping of the missionaries by their captors could simply be construed as a part of their participation in that ritual. However, in the light of what we have examined, it would seem unlikely that the authors' on-going emphasis on abnegation and their description of their confrères being stripped in an act of self-offering to God in martyrdom did not in some way converge in their religious imagination as they prepared these narratives.

This connection is made all the more understandable when one reads Vimont's description, included after his first account of Jogues' death, of how desperately needed provisions were stolen, at the same time as Jogues and the rest of his party were captured, by their enemies. Admiring the missionaries' desire to endure, despite their hunger and material need, Vimont asks the reader: 'What courage can they have in the temporal, which fails them?', and then goes on 'I well know that their resolution is to hold firm even to the end, and rather to go naked, like Father Jogues, than to give way'.⁵¹ This statement provides both a practical and a theological context within which to draw out some of the meaning associated with the accounts of the stripping of the five martyred missionaries. Their 'nakedness' betokens a state of total dependence on God in which, stripped of every material or 'temporal' thing, the men are said to be willing to 'carry on until the end'. Vimont suggests that, in fact, God labours even more 'perfectly' in the heart of a person who suffers 'privations',

⁴⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 12.

⁵⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 30.

⁵¹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 267.

unhindered by material objects.⁵² Thus, to be without the so-called security of ‘material objects’, to be stripped naked, is to be ‘detached’, self-abnegated, annihilated and fully disposed to the will of God.

4. A Divine Invitation to Embrace Suffering in the Martyrdom Accounts

Within the martyrdom accounts we see the culmination of the idea presented throughout the narratives that, in fact, the divine will sought by the Jesuits is principally understood to be that the missionaries, and those Amerindians who choose to embrace Christianity, should grow in their union with God in suffering. We recall that Le Jeune referred to God as the author of ‘afflictions’, and that all of the authors link their struggles and failures, calumny against them, the on-going threat of death, and even the disease suffered by the Amerindian peoples, in this light.⁵³ As we have seen, their formation in the Louis Lallemant school encouraged the Jesuits to understand that ‘crosses and afflictions’ are a part of the ‘eternal council of God’, and ultimately a blessing to be embraced.⁵⁴ The willingness of the eight missionaries to be captured and to suffer and die at the hand of their captors reflects this conviction, and the accounts of their martyrdoms take on a mystical quality; since these events were believed to have been choreographed by the Creator.

The copy of Jogues’ letter to the Governor, included in the 1642–1643 account of his first capture, makes this point clear. He reports that he is ‘more and more resolved to dwell here as long as it shall please Our Lord, and not to go away, even though an opportunity should present itself’.⁵⁵ He reiterates to the Governor that God

⁵² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 266–67.

⁵³ *Ibid.* See also Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1637), pp. 1, 67, 251–52; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), p. 89; Brébeuf, *Hurons* (1636), pp. 29–30; and Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 2; Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 164–65; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1638), p. 11; Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1639), pp. 54–55; Lalemant, *Hurons* (1638–1639), p. 120; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 13; Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 278–79; and Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1643–1644), p. 2.

⁵⁴ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 254.

⁵⁵ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 255.

is the one who put him there, and it is only God that can convince him to leave. And in a letter to his friend Charles Lalemant, he wrote that when the threats of death seemed almost overwhelming, he offered himself to Jesus Christ, committing himself ‘in all and through all to his most holy will’.⁵⁶ In the second report of Jogues’ first capture, Jérôme Lalemant includes the missionary’s account of events in which he wrote that he consoled his fellow prisoners by saying: ‘My dear brothers, God treats us in a strange manner, but he is the master, and he has done what has seemed best in his sight; he has followed his good pleasure’.⁵⁷ And in the necrology of Jogues, Jérôme Lalemant first suggests that ‘God led him by the hand [...] in his ordeal’,⁵⁸ and then observes that the missionary could have ‘escaped a hundred times if providence had not checked him’.⁵⁹ When he did escape from his first captivity among the Iroquois, it was because the ‘Lord prolonged his life, that he might come and present it to him another time, as a burnt-offering’.⁶⁰

This emphasis on the role of the Divine will in wanting Jogues to endure these sufferings as a part of his mission is most dramatically displayed during the account of his first captivity, when he must decide whether or not to accept an offer by Protestant Dutch traders to facilitate his escape on one of their ships. Having ultimately accepted their compassionate proposal, Jogues, for his own benefit, and later Vimont, as the author of the 1642–1643 *Relation*, had to explain why he chose to do so. After all, if the ultimate benefit to the mission was to offer one’s whole life

⁵⁶ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 288.

⁵⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 62.

⁵⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 143.

⁵⁹ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 142.

⁶⁰ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 144. Note: Referring to himself as a ‘burnt-offering’ to God, Jogues not only affirms here his belief that the divine will is shaping his circumstances, but he is also very likely echoing the call of his religious founder Ignatius who wrote, in his letter ‘The Final Word on Obedience’ (1553), that to be obedient to God is, to be ‘nothing less than a holocaust’ offering one’s self completely in the ‘fire of love to our Creator and Lord’. Ignatius Loyola, ‘The Final Word on Obedience’ in *Saint Ignatius Loyola: Personal Writings*, ed. by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean (London, 1996), p. 255.

lovingly as an oblation to Christ, if Louis Lallemand had instructed his pupils not to shirk any opportunity of suffering, why should he leave at all?

Jogues' initial reticence about the proposed escape plan is said to have perplexed the Dutchmen who offered it, but not as much as the missionary's final reply. Responding with misgivings, Jogues claims he said:

Sir, the affair seems to me of such importance that I cannot answer you at present. Give me, if you please, the night to think of it. I will commend it to our Lord. I will examine the arguments on both sides and, tomorrow morning, I will tell you my final resolution.⁶¹

In other words, he suggests, he has to know if this is what God wants, implying that the divine will was that he should have been captured and should have suffered. In the pages that follow, Jogues' account of events outlines, in great detail, the process of his reasoning. He claimed, first, that the French held with him were gone: two had died and one had escaped. Second, he claimed that the remaining Christian Hurons, believing him to be a 'marked man', had distanced themselves from him so as to avoid an untimely end for themselves, and that therefore he could offer them little more pastoral support. Third, he concluded that the level of hatred and disdain directed against him by his Iroquois captors made it now almost impossible to evangelize them. Finally, Jogues felt that he had learned a lot about the Iroquois while held captive, and realized that if he were to die, all that he had learned would be lost. With these thoughts in mind, he concluded that 'the Lord would be better pleased if I should take the opportunity to escape'.⁶²

The complexity of his decision outlined in the narrative reflects both his apparently ardent readiness to remain, and his resolution that only the will of God would convince him to escape his brutal captivity. This is reiterated in his description of the escape. He claimed that, while hidden in the bowels of the Dutch ship, waiting

⁶¹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 288–89.

⁶² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 289–92.

several days for its departure, he continuously asked God to ‘overthrow all the counsel that should not tend to his glory, and to detain me in the country of those infidels, if he did not approve my retreat and my flight’.⁶³ Then, while the Amerindians searched for him, and even passed over his hiding-place on several occasions, unable to detect his presence, Jogues concluded that God has in fact ensured his safety, writing: ‘God be blessed forever. We are unceasingly in the bosom of his divine and always adorable providence.’⁶⁴

This association between the divine will and the self-offering of the missionaries is present in other accounts. When describing the murder of Daniel in his 1648–1649 *Relation*, Ragueneau writes that it was in fact ‘the providence of God [that] had led him to this death in a special manner’.⁶⁵ He also suggests that Gabriel Lalemant had been ‘chosen by God as one of the first victims sacrificed to the hatred for the Christian name and faith’.⁶⁶ Brébeuf, he affirms in the same account, was ‘chosen by God to be the first Apostle of the [Hurons]’,⁶⁷ and had been told by God in prayer that he was to suffer, as Christ had suffered, for the people whom he had come to serve.⁶⁸ Brébeuf is said to have taken the mother of God, who suffered much ‘affliction’ for her part in Christ’s divine mission to save the world from sin, as one of his principle models of acceptance; he believed that ‘he must take her [Mary] in his adversity for an example of what God wished from him’.⁶⁹ Ragueneau writes that the death of Garnier invited all to adore ‘the divine hand that guides us’,⁷⁰ and when

⁶³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 296.

⁶⁴ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 298.

⁶⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 13.

⁶⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 53.

⁶⁷ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 58.

⁶⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 62.

⁶⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 78–79.

⁷⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 34.

acknowledging that little more could be done in the investigation of Chabanel's death, that it was enough that 'God's purposes should have been served'.⁷¹

An additional element in the martyrdom accounts can be found in the proclamation of Jogues, Brébeuf, and Lalemant that their suffering was not only of benefit of the Amerindian peoples, but also divinely instigated for the expiation of the missionaries' own sins. In one of his letters composed in captivity, and included by Vimont in the 1642–1643 *Relation*, Jogues presents two ideas that explain both his suffering and his escape. He writes at first that 'My sins and the unfaithfulness of my past life have made very heavy the hand of the divine Majesty, justly provoked against us';⁷² but on the next page, he recognizes that 'After all, my sins have rendered me unworthy to die among the Iroquois. I still live, and God grant that it be to amend myself; at least, I acknowledge it as a great favour, that he has willed that I should endure something'.⁷³

Here we see a double-edged sword in the rhetoric of martyrdom. Jogues both surmises that he was not yet holy enough to be given the gift of martyrdom, and that the Lord offered him suffering as a means of purging himself of past sins, so as to grow into that holiness. Thus his sins did not yet permit him to make the ultimate sacrifice, yet by lesser sacrifice he grew in holiness, and drew closer to his desire to offer all of himself to God in martyrdom. We see again that it is God who is the director of this narrative; it is God who ultimately decides whether one should receive martyrdom; and martyrdom is thus a divine gift that crowns a life deemed to be worthy of it.

This same theme continues in the second account of Jogues' capture, when Jérôme Lalemant, in his 1647 *Relation*, includes Jogues' own description of events.

⁷¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 58.

⁷² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 300.

⁷³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 301–02.

The missionary writes that when an Amerindian woman cut off the fingers he required to hold up the Eucharist during Mass, he ‘accepted this torture as a loving vengeance for the want of love and respect that I had shown, concerning your [Christ’s] Holy Body’.⁷⁴ This suggests that all the times in the past when Jogues had felt that he had not been respectful of the Eucharist were now recompensed by his loss of the ability ever again to lift it up in his hands. And in his necrology, Jérôme Lalemant wrote that Jogues kissed and venerated the posts supporting the scaffold where he was tortured, because he considered them ‘the instruments of divine justice for his crimes’.⁷⁵

The most dramatic example of Jogues’ religious worldview, however, is in the second account of his capture, where Jérôme Lalemant includes the mutilated prisoner’s description of a mystical dream he had while still detained among the Iroquois. In this dream, Jogues walks towards the Iroquois village, which is transformed into a city that one might find in ‘antiquity’, with white stoned walls, pillars and grand gates.⁷⁶ As he enters the second portico, acknowledging the sentries that guard it, he is so in awe of what he sees that he twice misses the call of a guard who had ordered him to stop and identify himself. When he finally stops, the guard says to Jogues, ‘is that the way you obey the voice of him who is on guard before the royal palace? Was it then necessary to call to you twice? [...] Come, be quick, appear before our Judge and our Captain’.⁷⁷ Escorted to a great hall, Jogues sees ‘a man, full of majesty, like to the ancient days’, as in classical times, ‘[...]’, dressed in a scarlet

⁷⁴ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 76–77.

⁷⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 134.

⁷⁶ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 90.

⁷⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 92.

robe, moving about, ‘rendering justice to his people’ all around him.’⁷⁸ Approaching the man, he writes that,

He draws a rod or baton from a bundle like those which were formerly borne before the Roman consuls [referring to a Roman *fasces*]; he struck me long and severely with that rod [...] I felt as much pain as I experienced at my entrance into the first village of the Iroquois [...] Never did I utter any complaint, never did I utter any groan under those blows. I suffered with pain all that was applied to me, finding patience in view of my own lowliness.⁷⁹

After this punishment, Jogues states that the judge so admired his patience that, putting down his rod, he embraced him and, in doing so, felt filled ‘with a consolation wholly divine and entirely inexplicable’.⁸⁰ The penitent then kissed the hands that had punished him, proclaiming from Psalm 22 ‘Your rod, O my Lord and my king, and your staff have comforted me’.

The substance of this dream reveals much of what the missionary understood to be at the root of his suffering among the Iroquois. Not only did he regard it as an opportunity to follow the divine will but, as we also see quite dramatically, he associated his suffering with divine punishment for his own sins. Upon entering the city, which one might easily conclude to be the city of God, Jogues does not hear the call of the king’s guards. Later in the dream, the king is revealed as either God the Father or Jesus Christ, an association that creates parallels with the call of ‘Christ the King’ in the *Exercises*. It is the will of the guard that Jogues ‘halt’, a will proclaimed by the servant of God, which he does not hear or obey, having been lost in the grandeur of the city around him. Interestingly, the guard asks whether it is necessary ‘to call to you twice’, perhaps an allusion in the mind of Jogues to the ‘second conversion’, about which Louis Lallemant spoke to him during his Tertianship when Jogues was invited into a deeper, more authentic commitment to the will of God. His

⁷⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 92–93.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 94.

punishment is delivered not by the guard but by God himself, a punishment with a divine rod of justice that, in Jogues' dream, perhaps resembled the rods of his captors that knocked him down every time he entered another one of their villages. But when he patiently accepts the blows inflicted upon him, and fervently kisses the instrument of his torture, his 'Lord' embraces him with a divine love that defies explanation. His failure to hear and respond to the will of God, his suffering at the hand of the Iroquois, and a divine purgation from sin all merge in his dreamscape. This reflects the religious worldview held by all the authors, according to whom the effects of suffering in martyrdom is instituted by the divine will – not only for the sake of the Amerindian peoples – but also for their own

5. A Union with Divine Suffering in the Martyrdom Accounts

More than the expiation of sin, however, as we have seen throughout our study, the religious worldview of the authors consistently illustrates the belief that suffering for God is also somehow suffering with God. In other words, it forms the mystical ground where a deeper union between the sufferer and the suffering Christ can grow. This belief is an essential aspect of the rhetoric of martyrdom in these narratives, which seeks to clarify the intent of those who accept suffering and death. Beyond any idea of suffering as an expiation of past sins, beyond any idea of the pragmatic social effect of dying for what one believes in, the authors' expression of the martyrs' self-sacrifice and annihilation is presented as a loving embrace of union with the divine person of Jesus Christ rather than merely the embracing of death. Like the hagiographers of the early Christian martyrs such as Ignatius of Antioch, Perpetua and the martyrs of Lyon,⁸¹ the authors of these accounts suggest that Jogues, Goupil, de Lalande, Daniel, Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Garnier and Chabanel experienced a

⁸¹ Cf. Chapter Two, pp. 95–99.

deeper union with Christ in their sufferings and deaths, by sharing in his loving self-sacrifice for the sake of the world.

This religious worldview, shared by the authors and their martyred confrères, was formed by their experience of the *Exercices*, in which every Christian is invited to emulate Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, and in love to reflect upon what they ought to offer him in return.⁸² In the first account of Jogues' capture, Vimont places emphasis upon his words in his letter to the Governor of *Nouvelle-France*: 'my life is God's'.⁸³ In his 1647 *Relation*, Jérôme Lalemant includes Jogues' proclamation, from one of his letters, which 'I have passed through cold and heat, for the love of my God'.⁸⁴ And when he was standing before the murdered body of his young companion Goupil, believing that he too was about to be struck down, Jogues is reported to have said to his captors, 'Give me a moment's time', and falling to his knees to have offered himself not to the blows of their tomahawks but instead 'in sacrifice to the divinity'.⁸⁵

Ragueneau adds to his narrative of the martyrdom of Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant an account of the effort to retrieve their bodies. He reports that, when the missionaries arrived in the village where the two men had been tortured and killed, 'they found there a spectacle of horror, the remains of cruelty itself: or rather the relics of the love of God, which alone triumphs in the death of Martyrs'.⁸⁶ This observation reveals two relevant points for our study. First, having been afflicted by what is referred to as 'cruelty itself' — the actual embodiment of cruelty — the martyrs' bodies are nevertheless described as 'relics of the love of God', suggesting that the purpose behind their death, was their loving embrace of God in suffering.

⁸² *SE* [107, 104, 193, 203, 231, 234].

⁸³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 259.

⁸⁴ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 79.

⁸⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 85.

⁸⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 45.

And, second, Ragueneau emphasizes that the bodies, as ‘relics’, are sacred, having participated in an act of divine loving that triumphed above all else.⁸⁷ In the necrology of Gabriel Lalemant, Ragueneau includes notes from the dead Jesuit’s private journal, which again emphasize the desire of the missionary to be united with God through suffering:

If you [Jesus Christ] have abandoned your contentment, your honours, your comforts your joys, and your life, in order to save me [...] is it more than reasonable that I abandon, after your example, all these things for the salvation of souls.⁸⁸

If Christ died for us, is it not reasonable that we, if necessary, should offer ourselves up to him? When reflecting upon the dangers of the mission in *Nouvelle-France*, Lalemant concludes that ‘it be reasonable that someone incline, from love, to give this satisfaction to Jesus Christ’.⁸⁹

Daniel, too, is described as being in a divine union with God upon his death, burned in his own church. Ragueneau suggests that when members of the war party that attacked the village where he was ministering cast Daniel into the flames, they made ‘a whole burnt offering to God’,⁹⁰ and that, ‘feeling himself called by God to the labours of his mission’, Daniel’s soul was ‘more ablaze than ever his body has been, though blessedly consumed in the midst of the flames’. Informing the readership that he and others had seen the spirit of Daniel appearing to them after his death, Ragueneau writes that, as the priests were struggling to decide how to proceed in their labours amidst rising tensions among the Amerindian peoples, Daniel

⁸⁷ In this context, a ‘relic’ refers to the whole or a part of a saint’s body that is preserved and venerated. A Christian tradition traceable to earliest days, the veneration of relics was encouraged by the Council of Trent in its twenty-fifth session, since the bodily remains of the saints on earth were believed mysteriously to participate in the miracle of the resurrection at the end of time. This fact makes them holy, a sort of portal into heaven, and a source of union with the saint that might bring about divine intervention in the life of anyone who prays with them to God. Cf. ‘Council of Trent’ in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Tanner, II, 774–75.

⁸⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 54.

⁸⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 56.

⁹⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 12.

appeared before them, ‘filling us with his light, and with the spirit of God with which he was completely invested’.⁹¹ Daniel’s embrace of God in death thus gave him a role as an intercessor, coming to his confrères in need.

Garnier, too, who did not flee from the dangers of the encroaching enemy, remained with the Christians of his village, and baptized many Amerindians who faced imminent death: his heart was ‘burning with no other fire than the love of God’.⁹² When he was shot by an Iroquois warrior, he tried to get up and help one of the many injured Amerindians around him, for his ‘Love of God, and zeal for souls, were even stronger than death’.⁹³ He

Rising with difficulty, dragged himself as best he could towards the sufferer, in order to assist him in dying well. He had made but three or four steps when he fell again, somewhat heavily. Raising himself for the second time, he got, once more, upon his knees and strove to continue on his way. But, his body, drained of its blood [...] for the third time he fell, having proceeded but five or six steps.⁹⁴

Here Ragueneau presents Garnier in a way that echoes the three falls of Christ as he carried his Cross from the house of the Roman procurator to Calvary. The correlation between the falls of Garnier and those of Christ on his way to the crucifixion would not have been missed in the religious imagination of the readership. In this sense, the idea of Garnier’s union with the Passion of Christ, with Christ himself, is intensified and again centred in his love for God. Ragueneau quotes from a letter that the missionary had composed to his brothers, reflecting on the imminent possibility of his death and praying that all of them might receive from God ‘his holy love’ and ‘a perfect union with him, and the grace of final perseverance’.⁹⁵ The author also presents the missing Chabanel as one who, amidst his suffering in the mission, held firm to suffering, which the author describes as ‘the Cross on which God had placed

⁹¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 16.

⁹² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 29.

⁹³ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 30.

⁹⁴ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 30–31.

⁹⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 53.

him' and never, he continues, 'did he ask that he might come down from it'.⁹⁶ In fact, he bound himself all the more to it by vowing never to leave *Nouvelle-France*. The suffering of the missionaries is thus linked to the suffering of Christ, and articulates a sought after-space of mystical union.

6. The Grace that Comes from Suffering with Christ in the Martyrdom Accounts

As we saw in chapter two, this mystical union with the suffering Christ is presented throughout the *Relations* as a relationship between the divine and the missionary that often brought with it special knowledge, constancy and courage amidst times of great adversity, the healing of the sick, victory over demonic forces and, most importantly, the conversion of Amerindian hearts to Christianity. Choosing to enter the 'land of the Cross' and joining Christ crucified for the sake of others was thought to have created a sacred space where the actions of the missionaries and those of Jesus Christ were conjoined. This was believed to have brought a kind of spiritual power, or grace, to *Nouvelle-France*, which had been present once and for all outside the gates of Jerusalem when the Son of God suffered for the sake of the world. Furthermore, the authors saw lovingly suffering with and for God, and the fruits of that mutual sharing, as the single greatest way that they could achieve their mission among the Amerindian peoples.

The early Christian rhetoric of Ignatius of Antioch, praying that his crushed body be the wheat of Eucharistic bread for the world, and of Tertullian, who wrote that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the faith', no doubt resonated in the minds of the Jesuit authors. After all, they had all understood from their reading of Kempis that there was nothing more profitable for the world than suffering for Christ, and that

⁹⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 61–62.

in the Cross of Christ is ‘salvation’, ‘sweetness’, ‘joy’, ‘virtue’ and ‘holiness’.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Louis Lallemand school had formed each of them to understand any suffering that comes from following Christ as a part of his ‘loving design’.⁹⁸ They had been taught that humiliation and suffering out of love for Christ brought with it a holy wisdom,⁹⁹ and Lallemand proposed to all under his charge that the greater the obstacle put before one’s efforts to serve God, and the more one has to endure, the greater the ‘Glory of God’ will be.¹⁰⁰ All this culminated in his belief that, just as Jesus Christ fulfilled his mission through his sufferings, likewise his ministers would produce the greatest fruits in his evangelical labours only if they are accompanied by calumny, injury and suffering.¹⁰¹

In the martyrdom accounts, these beliefs reach their climax. In the first account of Jogues’ sufferings, Vimont writes that he was a man ‘rich in extreme poverty, joyful [...] contented in the land of pains and sadness’, and ‘clothed like a Savage, or rather like saint John the Baptist’.¹⁰² This statement reflects the influence of Louis Lallemand, who had suggested that when one suffers for and with Christ, one experiences only joy. In the inner landscape of contemplative union with God, the experiences of martyrdom are transformed. Just as Ignatius of Antioch became the Eucharist to be devoured and Perpetua became a great warrior on the battlefield of Christ, Jogues takes on the role of the great Christian evangelist.

Vimont describes the letter of Jogues to the Governor of *Nouvelle-France* as being ‘more sublime than that which proceeds from the most pompous schools of Rhetoric’, and provides for the reader a ‘noble idea of his grandeur’. In his suffering

⁹⁷ *Imitatio*, II, 9.

⁹⁸ *SD*, p. 60.

⁹⁹ *SD*, pp. 154–55.

¹⁰⁰ *SD*, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ *SD*, pp. 59–60.

¹⁰² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 258.

state, the missionary's words took on a new level of spiritual profundity.¹⁰³ When Daniel chose to stay with the Amerindians, facing the full onslaught of the enemy and practically ensuring his own death, according to Ragueneau, he spoke to them with 'a tone so animated with the spirit which was possessing him, that, having made a breach in hearts which till then had been most rebellious, he gave them a Christian heart'.¹⁰⁴ Daniel repeated again and again the words, 'My [brothers] today we shall be in heaven', reminding his listeners (and Ragueneau's readers) of Christ's promise to the sinner crucified next to him (Luke 23:43), but also perhaps becoming the presence of Christ in choosing to die with them. He was well received as he 'baptizes some, gives absolution to others, and consoles them all with the sweetest hope of the Saints'.¹⁰⁵ So many Amerindians were baptized, it is said, in those last moments of his life that 'he was constrained to dip his handkerchief in the water [...] in order to shed abroad as quickly as possible this grace on those poor *Sauvages*'.¹⁰⁶ Indeed it was this spirit of self-offering that, according to Ragueneau, in the end left a tender 'affection for his memory' and 'ravished the hearts of all those who have ever known him'.¹⁰⁷

In Ragueneau's description of Brébeuf's torture, it is recorded that the missionary, at the height of his pain, continued to preach to both his torturers and the Christian captives who watched in horror. To stop this, his mouth was 'girdled', while his nose and lips were cut off. And yet, the author writes, 'his blood spoke much more loudly than his lips had done'.¹⁰⁸ This striking sentence brings together in the religious imagination of the author a belief in the power of self-sacrifice for Christ and also the belief that, as Louis Lallemant suggested, in suffering the minister finds

¹⁰³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 256.

¹⁰⁴ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 9.

¹⁰⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 48.

his full effectiveness in the mission. In his necrology of Garnier, Ragueneau recounts the martyr's words:

‘We shall do nothing’, he used to say, ‘for the salvation of souls, if God does not take sides with us. When it is he who sets us apart to this, by the direction of obedience, he binds himself to aid us in it; and, with him assisting us, we shall accomplish that which he expects of us. But, when it happens that we set our hearts on any particular employment, be it the holiest on earth, God does not bind himself to second our efforts, but leaves us to ourselves; and, of ourselves, what can we accomplish save nothing, or the sin which lowers us beneath nothing’.¹⁰⁹

It is in union with God, therefore, that the Jesuit will find his fullest effectiveness in mission. It is said that Garnier's charity, selflessness and single-minded desire to offer himself to God through his labours made his heart speak ‘louder than his words’, and that several Amerindians embraced Christianity ‘by the mere aspect of his countenance, which was truly Angelic, and which imparted a spirit of devotion, and chaste impressions’.¹¹⁰ In an extreme case, Ragueneau implies that it was in failing to learn the Amerindian languages and in being treated like an idiot by so many whom he had come to serve that Chabanel found his greatest apostolic effectiveness. After having realized that this weakness was the cross that he had been given to bear by God, and after having embraced it by pronouncing a vow to remain in *Nouvelle-France* for the rest of his life, Chabanel claimed ‘no longer [to] feel any fear’, and was more willing to travel to the most dangerous parts of the land at the service of God.¹¹¹ One Jesuit said that he had been ‘deeply moved’ simply by speaking with him, and by having heard the words of ‘a victim who immolates himself’.¹¹²

This *ad intra* effect on the missionary of suffering for and with Christ is all the more present in the martyrdom accounts as having a profound, mystical *ad extra* effect. The suffering and death of the Jesuits who were tortured and killed nourished a

¹⁰⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 46.

¹¹⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), pp. 37–38.

¹¹¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1649–1650), p. 64.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

desire, it was believed, among the Amerindian people to embrace the Christian faith. Vimont includes in his 1642–1643 *Relation* a letter written to him by an unnamed Jesuit missionary, who insists that, since Jogues' first capture,

We are entering more and more into the possession of goods that we come to buy in this end of the world at the price of our blood and of our lives [...] the affairs of our Lord advance in proportion to the disgraces that he sends us.¹¹³

Another missionary concludes that Jogues' predicament is in fact a sign of his 'good fortune', and argues that 'the rage of our enemies augments our merit, and their fires, our glory; when we shall enter Heaven by that gate, we shall have a greater force by which to attract them'.¹¹⁴ This last comment illustrates the missionaries' belief that in suffering for Christ at the hands of their enemies, as Jogues was doing, they would induce a divine force to draw the Amerindians into the Christian faith.

In Jogues' own account of his ordeal, included by Jérôme Lalemant in his 1647 *Relation*, he admits that, when faced with the thought of avoiding capture, his heart concluded that 'It must be [...] that my body suffer the fire of earth, in order to deliver these poor souls from the flames of Hell; it must die a transient death, in order to procure for them an eternal life'.¹¹⁵ Then, seeing a fellow Frenchman who had fled return in order to remain with him, he embraced him and said, 'offer your pains and anguish to God, on behalf of those very persons who torment you. Let us not draw back; let us suffer courageously for his holy name'.¹¹⁶ The grace of suffering was also open to those who brought it about, since through the martyrs' sacrifice even their torturers could be granted divine forgiveness and might embrace the Christian faith. Lalemant makes the same point in his necrology of Jogues, writing that the missionary held a great ardour for 'enduring the rage of the Iroquois for the sake of

¹¹³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 269–70.

¹¹⁴ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 281.

¹¹⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 62.

¹¹⁶ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 64.

the Iroquois themselves'.¹¹⁷ Lalemant also includes in the 1647 *Relation* a passage from Jogues' account about an encounter with a dying Amerindian man. The man approached Jogues and asked him, 'Do you not know me?' After some time, Jogues remembered his face; this was a man who, during his first days of torture, had shown him compassion and cut him down from a scaffold where he had been left hanging for several hours. Now, facing death from disease and having witnessed Jogues' torture, the Amerindian came to him for catechesis and was baptized.¹¹⁸ The link between suffering and grace, and the rejection of the faith transformed into its acceptance, two themes present throughout the *Relations*, appear here in the martyrdom account in a particularly powerful way; the suffering of Jogues cultivated a landscape of religious experience where faith is born.

In the account of Daniel's death, Ragueneau testifies that it was the dramatic rush of the pastor towards the enemy war party, dressed in his vestments, that allowed time for many Amerindian Christians to escape and left them 'indebted for their lives to the death of their father'.¹¹⁹ More than this, however, the author claims that the dead missionary appeared to a Jesuit in the missions and proclaimed:

God is great and adorable forever. He has regarded the reproaches cast upon this his servant, and, in order to recompense them in God [...] he has given me many souls that were in purgatory, who have accompanied my entrance and my triumph into Heaven.¹²⁰

Daniel's sufferings and the manner of his death are presented as salvific, to be rewarded by God with 'many souls' that had not yet found their way to heaven. In the cases of Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant, Ragueneau writes that it was the torturers themselves who articulated this link between suffering and divine grace. During their tortures, some apostatized Christians who were participating in the ritual took pots of

¹¹⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 137.

¹¹⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 109–10.

¹¹⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 12.

¹²⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 16.

boiling water and poured it over them several times ‘in derision of Holy Baptism’.¹²¹ Some of them reminded their victims that without baptism they could not be saved; others, presumably exposed in their catechesis to the missionaries’ understanding of abnegation, said ‘we treat thee as a friend, since we shall be the cause of your greatest happiness up in heaven [...] for, the more you suffer, the more your God will reward you’.¹²² In the necrology of Gabriel Lalemant, Ragueneau included a passage from the journal of the newly arrived missionary, where he wrote, ‘Yes, my Jesus and my love, it must therefore be that your blood, shed for the *barbares* as well as for us, be efficaciously applied for their salvation; and this is wherein I wish to co-operate with your grace, and to sacrifice myself for them’.¹²³

7. The Role of Satan and his Legions in the Ultimate Sacrifice of the Missionaries

Thus far, we have focussed in the presentation of the martyrdom accounts on the presence of the divine and the missionary. The former is said to have allowed the events and even willed them to be as a sort of gift, so as to set the mystical stage where the latter can, in love, choose to embrace Christ crucified, for both his own salvation and that of the Amerindian peoples he had come to serve. Yet, in five of the accounts, the authors include another element, either specifically referring to the torturers as ‘demons’ or ‘half-demons’, or alluding to ‘hell’ more generally when describing how the missionaries endured the Amerindians’ torture ritual. As we have seen in chapter three, it is tempting to conclude that the use of the term ‘demon’ and the references to hell are just a metaphor to provoke the imagination of the reader. In this case, these words might simply be absorbed into the identities of the non-Christian Amerindians and left as a rhetorical device designed to revile the torturers.

¹²¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 48.

¹²² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 49.

¹²³ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 55.

But our study has revealed that *Nouvelle-France* was considered an ‘Empire of Satan’, and the devil and his demons often presented as active characters in the *Relations*. To diminish their presence is to ignore an important part of the rhetoric of martyrdom in these pages.

Through the religious worldview put in place by the *Exercices*, the authors saw two standards presented to every person, that of Christ and that of Lucifer, and believed that every person had to make a fundamental choice in life to serve either one or the other. This free choice was thought to be constantly under attack from the devil who was said in the work of Bérulle to be always seeking new ways of attacking God.¹²⁴ Loyola had seen this attack manifesting itself in two principal ways: first, in Satan’s attempt to keep persons locked in a pattern of sinful behaviour rooted in sensual desires;¹²⁵ and, second, in the harassment and obstruction of anyone who recognised the first attack or tried to thwart it.¹²⁶ In the *Relations*, too, the devil and his demons are presented as antagonists of the divine, the missionaries and the Amerindians.

In a land filled with people who had never heard of God, these evil forces were said to have planted in the minds of the Amerindian peoples strong ideas of self-indulgence, licentiousness and the fear of their own mortality. These, in turn, became habits and finally, again with the intervention of Satan, were enshrined in Amerindian culture, traditions and rituals. When Christian evangelization by the Jesuits challenged this trajectory — when self-indulgence was countered with self-sacrifice, licentiousness with self-offering, and the fear of death with a call to warmly embrace it for love of God — the authors suggest that the devil incited in some Amerindians a

¹²⁴ Bérulle, *Traite des Energumenes*, p. 23. Cf. chapter two, p. 115.

¹²⁵ *SE* [314].

¹²⁶ *SE* [315].

brutal retaliation in the form of misunderstanding, physical trials, calumny, hatred, threats, and murder.

The particular Christian anthropology was further supported by Louis Lallemand, who strongly reiterated this aspect of the *Exercises*, and suggested that to ‘avoid all resemblances to the devil’ one must also avoid all ‘resemblances to brutes’, namely, ‘passions, and the disorderly movements of the sensual appetites’.¹²⁷ José de Acosta also proposed that the devil sought to usurp God among the Amerindian peoples by encouraging them to deify elements of the material world around them. Once again, Acosta understood the chief aim of Satan as being to encourage every person to redirect his or her affections away from the divine, ‘to worship the creature as God’.¹²⁸

When we turn to the martyrdom accounts we find these elements are also present. In several cases, Amerindian torturers are referred to as a ‘demon’ or ‘half-demon’. The authors understand their actions as being rooted in a desire for retribution, as well as an apparent pleasure in inflicting pain. The very fact that this event is itself a form of spiritual ritual, or tradition, only compounds this belief, and suggests to them an endemic disposition to self-centredness that the authors largely attribute to the often-subtle influence of the devil. The Amerindians are not considered to have been ‘possessed’ by demons during these events, but rather motivated by various forms of self-gratification, urged on by the devil’s desire for them to remain unaware that true gratification comes from lovingly knowing and fulfilling the will of God.

As we have seen in chapter four, this perceived attitude is often underlined by the authors’ decision to use the designation *barbare*, which Vimont associates with

¹²⁷ *SD*, p. 106. See also *SD*, pp. 42, 103, 119, 116, 154, 204.

¹²⁸ *Natural and Moral History*, pp. 254–55.

behaving in a way that is less than human. The term ‘demon’ in the martyrdom accounts identifies the force that the authors believe to be encouraging the native people. Their self-satisfaction in torturing and killing the missionaries is juxtaposed with the missionaries’ willingness to offer themselves fully to God. This climax of Satan’s attack on the missionaries is thus understood by the authors to be their final victory over him, in which they move through this suffering to embrace Christ, and all that is terrible in the accounts is turned to glory. Every account of suffering at the instigation of Satan throughout the *Relations* is taken up and overturned in the final response made by these eight men.

Vimont is the first to refer to the torturers as demons in his account of Jogues’ capture: ‘The Iroquois, having taken him the second day of August, 1642, dragged him into their country, with the shouts and hooting of demons who carry off their prey’.¹²⁹ He also suggests that Jogues was taken to a place where demons take the souls they wish to destroy. What is left ambiguous is whether this place is simply an Iroquois village where he and his companions will be tortured, or whether it implies an inner movement in the missionary himself, to a place in his heart where he will have to face a battle against Satan through the suffering inflicted upon him. And the wording used to describe their treatment of Jogues – he was ‘dragged’, accompanied by the ‘shouts’ and ‘hooting’ of his captors – suggests a kind of frenzy of excitement or impassioned behaviour, a disposition thought by the authors to be continuously encouraged by Satan and his forces.

Vimont writes that, during their imprisonment, one of the young Frenchmen accompanying Jogues had managed to escape into the woods. After seeing the ‘cruelties that were practised upon two poor [*Hurons*], roasted at a slow fire’, he

¹²⁹ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 256.

could not bear the thought of suffering a similar fate, and preferred to die in the wilderness ‘than to endure the torments which these half demons made them suffer’.¹³⁰ Vimont’s use of the term ‘half demon’ could be understood as an analogy expressing his disgust at the Amerindians’ practices. But as we saw in chapter four, Jérôme Lalemant suggested that when the Amerindians act from selfish desires — when they steal, are unfaithful in their relationships, torture, murder or eat their enemies — they are behaving in a way that is other than human.¹³¹ Those who inflicted this torture, and the cruelty that they displayed, were thought to have been — at the very least — inspired, and perhaps even guided, by the Satan and his minions.

In the second account of Jogues’ first capture, Jérôme Lalemant describes the battle between the Iroquois and Jogues’ party and the efforts of the young Frenchman Couture to ward off the enemy. After Couture had shot one of the aggressors, the author writes that ‘four other Iroquois fell upon him with a rage of lions, or rather of demons’.¹³² The same associations are employed later in the account, when Jogues describes his first experience of torture: ‘They burned one of my fingers, and crushed another with their teeth, and those, which were already torn, they squeezed and twisted with a rage of Demons’.¹³³ The description of the torturers as tearing Jogues’ finger with their ‘teeth’ suggests the behaviour of animals; but their ‘rage’ is demonic rather than merely bestial. And in both these examples, the author suggests that the Amerindians were acting in a fury, lost in their passions — a state linked to the

¹³⁰ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 290.

¹³¹ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 32.

¹³² Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 63. Note: Here Lalemant brings together two powerful ideas. Not only does he associate the Amerindians with demonic influence but also, in stating that they fell upon the missionaries with the ‘rage of lions’ he is also associating Jogues’ ordeal with that of Ignatius of Antioch, who longed to be ground into sacred wheat by the teeth of a lion in the amphitheatre, and more generally with the Roman practice of releasing lions and other animals upon condemned early Christians. This association once again illustrates the influence of the early Christian community on the minds of the authors in *Relations*. See: Chapter One, p. 54; and Chapter Two, pp. 84–92.

¹³³ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 69.

overarching influence of the devil on a people who have not yet encountered an alternative disposition through relationship with God.

Jérôme Lalemant later includes, from Jogues' own testimony, the missionary's description of his mind and feelings as he and his fellow Christian prisoners were taken deep into the enemy's territory. Jogues writes that he was profoundly saddened to see some of the earliest Amerindian Christian converts, whom the missionaries had hoped would be 'the pillars of that fledgling church', captured and destined for torture and death.¹³⁴ He describes this defeat as one that 'made me die every hour, in the depth of my soul', and laments: 'It is a very hard thing, or rather very cruel, to see the triumph of the demons over whole nations redeemed with so much love, and paid for in the money of a blood so adorable'.¹³⁵ As we have seen in various ways throughout chapter three, the challenges faced by the missionaries — calumny, disease, hatred and the constant threat of death — were often attributed to the machinations of the devil and his demons, in their effort to defeat any attempts at Christian evangelization in *Nouvelle-France*. In this martyrdom account, this belief is once more articulated in Jogues' regret. God has, in effect, suffered a kind of defeat in the cosmic battle for the salvation of souls. The victory of the 'demons', as Jogues expresses it here, is all the more keenly felt since those who are to die are leaders among the Amerindian Christian community and so the missionaries' objectives are particularly disrupted by Satan's counterattack.

Later, one Iroquois is said to have severely beaten Jogues in an uncontrolled 'fury', and is described by Jérôme Lalemant as a 'madman'.¹³⁶ He suggests that there are many 'madmen' among the Amerindians, who act with extreme violence provoked by some sort of internal agitation. He assures the readership that they are

¹³⁴ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 66.

¹³⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 67.

¹³⁶ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 107.

not ‘injured in the brain by any natural disease’, but rather ‘possessed by some demon, who causes in them this fury from time to time’.¹³⁷ Jogues’ torturer was thus in a state of unbridled emotion, swept up in his passions, a state caused by the work of ‘demons’. The prompting of demonic forces, the surrender of the Amerindian to his passions and the infliction of suffering upon the missionary are brought together in this martyrdom account. Another Amerindian man, enraged to discover that his kinsman had not returned from war and was probably dead, passionately insisted upon killing their prisoner, Jogues, according to a ritual of retribution considered by the authors to be common in their customs. The man was mistaken, and as the village celebrated the return of the war party in a state of ecstatic joy, they instead burned, flayed, roasted and consumed their new prisoners of war in such a fashion that Jogues concluded that ‘the demons do something similar in Hell, at the sight of souls condemned’.¹³⁸

Jérôme Lalemant’s 1647 account of de la Lande’s death makes clear that such dangers did not deter the young layman from his commitment to labour alongside the Jesuit missionaries. Knowing the danger involved in accompanying Jogues back to the Iroquois nation, he is said to have told the priests that ‘the desire of serving God was leading him into a country where he surely expected to meet death’, and yet he was at peace with this.¹³⁹ Lalemant suggests that this frame of mind ‘has enabled him to pass into a life which no longer fears either the rage of those *barbares*, or the fury of the demons, or the pangs of death’.¹⁴⁰ God has led the young man to his death, and it was the young man’s desire to serve the divine will that had spurred him on. It was the rage of the ‘barbarians’ and the fury of demons that had ended his life.

¹³⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 108.

¹³⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 106.

¹³⁹ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 133.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

In the necrology of Gabriel Lalemant, Ragueneau includes a portion of the newly arrived missionary's journal, where he proclaimed:

It must be that your name be adored, that your Kingdom be extended through all the Nations of the world; and that I consume my life, in order to withdraw from the hands of Satan, your enemy, these poor souls who have cost you both your blood and your life.¹⁴¹

The authors' views on Satan and the manner in which he might be defeated are presented here in a single sentence. God is to be 'adored', and the rule of God, the divine will, is to be the Kingdom that extends to include all the nations of the world. The Kingdom of God is juxtaposed with the 'hands of Satan', the 'enemy' of God. The phrase 'hands of Satan' suggests that the devil has a grasp, an agency manoeuvring in the affairs of the world and, here, perhaps the focus of that manipulation is his perceived control over *Nouvelle-France*. Satan's hold, however, can be forcibly released by the missionary's 'consuming' his life, offering it up totally to God. In this offering, Gabriel Lalemant and all of the martyrs are presented as sharing in the divine action of Christ who, as we are reminded here, offered his 'blood' and his 'life' for all — including the Amerindian peoples. Satan is a force present in the lands of *Nouvelle-France*, a real and present enemy, whom the missionaries can assist in exorcising — releasing any influence he has over the peoples to whom they are ministering — through total self-offering to God.

8. 'Sauvages' or 'Barbares' and their Rhetorical use in the Martyrdom Accounts

In chapter four, I attempted to illustrate how the intellectual and religious worldview of the authors of the *Relations* determined how they used the designations *sauvages* and *barbares* to accentuate rhetorically aspects of the Amerindians' human identity, spiritual state and behaviour. As we have seen, at the forefront of their practice was a religious belief that human persons are incomplete without an active relationship with

¹⁴¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 55–56.

God. The authors employ the designation *sauvages* as a general term when they describe who the Amerindians are, and who they might become if they embrace the Christian God. Unaware of God, they are considered to be disordered in their affections, and often guided by their passions and material needs. This, according to the authors, is dangerous, for without God as the central governing force of life, the human person was thought to become a slave to the passions, and thereby self-centred and materialistic. When the Amerindians are seen to lie, steal, gorge on food, fall into concupiscence, behave violently, get lost in vengefulness, harbour a love for war, torture, kill and eat their enemies, they are thought to be manifesting the effects of this unawareness of God. Without God in their lives, the Amerindians allow their human identity to fall aside so that they might embrace their passions. In these circumstances, the designation *barbares* is employed to emphasize the authors' understanding.

The terms *sauvages* and *barbares* therefore become a part of the rhetoric of martyrdom found throughout the narratives. Every time the designation *barbares* is used in the *Relations*, the authors are not only making use of classical descriptions or early modern French definitions, but also explicitly expressing that here humans are rejecting God and subsequently their own human identity. When the designation *barbares* is found in the martyrdom accounts, it therefore has a double impact on the reader. A *barbare* is one who, internally driven by his or her own desires and passions, displaces God from the centre of life and rejects his or her own human identity. At the same time the *barbare* is also depicted as killing a missionary, an agent of the divine who had come to help correct this soteriological problem. The rhetorical use of these two designations is present in the accounts of the martyrdoms of Jogues, Goupil, de la Lande, Daniel, Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Garnier and Chabanel.

In the 1642–1643 account of Jogues’ capture by the Iroquois, Vimont employs the rhetorical designation *barbares* in two places: where the missionary is stripped naked and where he is verbally assaulted. First, the author writes that, ‘those *barbares* tear off his cassock. They strip him, and, to cover his nakedness, throw at him a bit of an old skin covered with smut and stench’.¹⁴² Later in the account, he says that Jogues’ ‘ears are assaulted with a thousand abuses, a thousand taunts, and a thousand insults, which those *barbares* vomit against the French, against the Christian *sauvages*, and against our allies’.¹⁴³ In these instances, the utilization of *barbares* is related to four concepts that we have studied.

First, when the Iroquois are violently attacking Jogues; they ‘tear’ his cassock rather than merely removing it, suggesting that they are acting in uncontrolled emotion, perhaps rage. The use of *barbares* here serves as an indication of the Amerindians’ uncontrolled behaviour, governed by their unchecked passions rather than their faculty of reason. They are choosing to reject the human quality of self-control that is present in the mind of every Amerindian, as it is in all human persons. Second, they strip him, revealing his body to the world. This lack of modesty in relation to the body is consistent with the authors’ overall observations of indecent and licentious behaviour among the Amerindians throughout the narratives. Third, we see how the Iroquois ‘throw’ Jogues a ‘bit of an old skin’ to cover his body. This action recalls Le Jeune’s description of food being rudely thrown in front of guests attending a feast, reflecting both a lack of *politesse* and a cruelty that are also described as ‘*barbare*’ in various parts of the narratives.¹⁴⁴ Finally, Jogues’ cassock was an external sign of his priesthood, and its forcible removal could represent their efforts to tear God away from the priest, while their insults are directed explicitly

¹⁴² Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), pp. 257–58.

¹⁴³ Vimont, *Nouvelle-France* (1642–1643), p. 258.

¹⁴⁴ Le Jeune, *Nouvelle-France* (1636), p. 128.

against the Christians, God's people. When the Amerindians, and particularly the Iroquois, attack the Jesuits or their larger evangelical project, they were thought to be attacking God, and are therefore referred to as *barbares*.

In the 1647 account of Jogues' first capture, Jérôme Lalemant uses the same rhetoric that Vimont had employed four years earlier. The Iroquois are referred to as *barbares* as they 'divided among themselves their plunder, rejoicing in their prey with great shouts of glee'.¹⁴⁵ Later in the narrative, it is said that 'One of those *barbares*, advanced with a large knife in his right hand', in order to cut off Jogues' nose.¹⁴⁶ His two remaining fingernails were ripped out by *barbares* who 'tore them with their teeth, shredding the flesh from beneath, and cutting it clean to the bone with their nails, which they allow to grow very long'.¹⁴⁷ One of his companions then warns Jogues not to pick up his finger from the ground since, 'If those *barbares* saw me keep my thumb, they would make me eat it and swallow it all raw'.¹⁴⁸ In the biting winter cold, 'Another *barbare* asked the Father for the greater part of a piece of blanket that served him as a gown, mattress and blanket', leaving the battered missionary exposed to the elements.¹⁴⁹ Lalemant paraphrases Jogues in proclaiming: 'I was the mud and the slush of those *barbares*, the shame and the sport of men'; no doubt a reference to the image of the 'suffering servant' presented in the Hebrew Scriptures (Isaiah 50:6).¹⁵⁰ Finally, the *barbares* decide to keep Jogues a captive, so that the Iroquois might benefit from having a French prisoner to barter with their adversaries.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 65.

¹⁴⁶ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 69.

¹⁴⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 73.

¹⁴⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 77.

¹⁴⁹ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 88.

¹⁵⁰ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 100.

¹⁵¹ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 83.

The use of the rhetorical designation *barbares* in this account is consistent with its overall use throughout the *Relations*. The Amerindians' apparent focus on materiality is extended to the person of Jogues himself, when they are called *barbares* for treating him like an object, forcefully assigning him, as if he were a slave, to be the property of an Iroquois family where he will become a plaything, the sport of men. And the designation *barbares* emphasizes the violence of the Amerindians when they tear his fingernails out with their teeth and when Jogues hides his severed thumb so as to avoid having to eat it. These behaviours are considered by the authors to be rooted in uncontrollable, impassioned, cruel and vengeful impulses that are indulged at the expense of their human identities.

Lalemant maintains the same rhetorical distinction between *barbares* and *sauvages* that Vimont had employed. Describing the capture of Jogues' flotilla, the missionary himself is quoted:

Eight days after our departure from the shores of the great river of Saint Lawrence we met two hundred Iroquois who were coming in pursuit of the French and of the *sauvages*, our allies. We were obliged at this meeting to sustain a new shock. It is a belief among those *barbares* that those who go to war are all the more happy in proportion to the level of cruelty they afford their enemies.¹⁵²

The Iroquois *barbares* are clearly distinguished from the other native people present, who are identified as '*des sauvages, nos allies*'. The use of both designations in the one sentence accentuates their different rhetorical uses: *sauvages* describes the Christian Amerindians travelling in the flotilla.¹⁵³ In the dramatic description of torture that we examined at the beginning of chapter four, it was used for the Amerindian who chose to show pity on Jogues. In both cases, the designation *barbares* highlights the brutality and mercilessness of the Iroquois, their cruelty towards their captured enemies and their ignoring of Jogues' plea for pity.

¹⁵² Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 67.

¹⁵³ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 80.

In his 1647 account of Jogues' second capture and subsequent death, after Jogues had been sent back to the Iroquois Nation as an ambassador of peace, Lalemant says that he returned to the *barbares*.¹⁵⁴ He paraphrases a first-hand account by a Dutch nobleman of Jogues' arrival among the Iroquois:

Those unthankful *barbares* did not wait until after they had arrived in their huts, [the missionaries] were stripped naked [...] saying: 'you will die tomorrow; be not astonished [...] have courage; I shall strike you with the hatchet and will set your heads on the palisades'.¹⁵⁵

The Iroquois maliciously welcome Jogues as an envoy of peace, all the while intending to kill him — the designation indicates here, as it often does throughout the narratives, that they are liars. In the description of Jogues' death, the same rhetorical designations appear:

Know then, that on the eighteenth, in the evening, when they called Isaac to supper, he got up and went away with that *barbare* to the dwelling of the Bear. There was a traitor with his hatchet behind the door, who upon his [Jogues] entering, split open his head. Then immediately he cut it off, and set it on the palisade [...] Sir, I don't know, nor have I heard from any *sauvages*, why they killed him.¹⁵⁶

In this account, the designation *barbare* appears rhetorically to accentuate two behaviours. First, the Amerindians are referred to as *barbares* when they are seen to behave deceitfully or are described as untrustworthy. Here, the *barbares* have invited Jogues to supper, but intend to kill him. Furthermore, the act of murder is not committed face-to-face, but stealthily, from behind the doorway. Throughout the narratives, the term *barbare* is used when the Amerindians are described as behaving unfairly. By contrast, when inquiries are made in the villages as to why Jogues was murdered, the author refers to those Amerindians as *sauvages*. So while all are *sauvages*, the designation *barbares* is applied specifically to those who lied, practised subterfuge, and murdered the missionary.

¹⁵⁴ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), pp. 125–26.

¹⁵⁵ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 129.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Jogues was not the only captive during his two imprisonments among the Iroquois. In the first case, the accounts of Vimont (1642–1643) and of Jérôme Lalemant (1647) refer to the murder of Goupil, and in the second, Lalemant describes the murder of de la Lande. Though the 1642–1643 account of Goupil’s death offers no examples of the expression *barbares*, the 1647 account does include the designation, and differentiates it clearly from *sauvages*:

While they were returning towards their village [...] the nephew of that old man, and another *sauvage*, armed with hatchets and watching for the right moment, to meet them. Having approached them, one of these men says to the Father, ‘walk ahead’; and at the same time he breaks the head of poor René Goupil, who on falling and dying pronounced the Holy Name of Jesus. The Father, seeing him fallen, falls upon him and embraces him. Those *barbares* pull him away, and deal two more blows with the hatchet on that blessed body.¹⁵⁷

One of the Iroquois men is referred to as a *sauvage* when he walks out with his uncle to meet the missionaries, but after one of them tears Jogues away from Goupil’s body and the other violently attacks it twice more with his axe, in their violence both are referred to as *barbares*. Moreover, the designation appears to have even greater significance, since it is explained in the narrative that de la Lande was killed for having blessed a member of the murderer’s family with the sign of the cross. The word is thus associated with an attack on God.

In the brief 1647 account of de la Lande’s martyrdom, the Iroquois are again referred to as *barbares*. Jérôme Lalemant writes:

Seeing the dangers in which he was involving himself in so perilous a journey, [la Lande] declared at his departure that the desire of serving God was leading him into a country where he surely expected to meet death. This disposition has enabled him to pass into a life which no longer fears either the rage of those *barbares*, nor the fury of the demons, nor the pangs of death.¹⁵⁸

Lalemant here directly associates the designation *barbares* with the ‘rage’ of some Amerindians, a rage thought to represent their inability to control their passions. The

¹⁵⁷ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 85.

¹⁵⁸ Lalemant, *Nouvelle-France* (1647), p. 133.

source of this rage, Lalemant suggests, is that de la Lande was among the Iroquois serving God.

The murder of Daniel (d. 1648) takes place during an Iroquois attack against the village of St Joseph. In his 1648–1649 account, Ragueneau applies the same rhetorical designations, using *barbares* to mark the behaviour of the Amerindians and their violent treatment of the missionary:

The enemy was warned that the Christians had taken themselves, in very great numbers, into the Church, and that it was the easiest and the richest prey that he could have hoped for. He hastens there amidst howls of the *barbares* and astonishing shouts.¹⁵⁹

Later, after the Iroquois had shot Daniel with a musket, Ragueneau adds: ‘It was then that those *barbares* [...] rushed upon him with as much rage as if he alone had been the object of their hatred’.¹⁶⁰ The author gives the impression here that the Iroquois were behaving wildly and uncontrollably, howling like animals; it was as if they were hunting the Christians with the intention of entering the church and killing all those within. Daniel was killed therefore because of a hatred that led to rage and finally murder, and the designation *barbares* is used to reinforce this point with its associations of uncontrolled, passionate inner feeling.

The murders of Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant are described in the same publication. Ragueneau begins the account by stating:

Hatred for the faith and contempt for the name of God have been among the most powerful motives that have influenced the minds of the *barbares* to inflict upon [Brébeuf and Lalemant] as many cruelties as ever the rage of tyrants obliged the martyrs to endure.¹⁶¹

The author puts in the mouth of Brébeuf a prayer of thanksgiving, in which the missionary acknowledges that the blood of Christ was also shed for his torturers, for

¹⁵⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 11.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 45.

les barbares as much as for anyone else.¹⁶² And when the missionaries are close to death, the Iroquois are described as *barbares* when they eat the flesh and hearts of their victims, and drinking their warm blood:

Before their deaths, both their hearts were torn out, through an opening above the breast; and those [*barbares*] inhumanly feasted on them, drinking their blood quite warm, which they drew from its source with sacrilegious hands. While still alive, pieces of flesh were removed from their thighs, fat from their legs, and from their arms, which the executioners roasted on coals and ate in front of them.¹⁶³

Five behaviours are described here, all consistent with the use of the term *barbare*. At the outset, Ragueneau suggests that the core motivation for the Iroquois' behaviour is hatred. Ragueneau briefly extends this suggestion, explaining that this hatred had 'influenced [their] minds'; the Amerindians as unable to control their feelings rationally. It was hatred that twisted their behaviour, causing them to inflict many 'cruelties' on the missionaries. He associates the words *barbares* and 'inhumanly': a choice of words that is consistent with Lalemant's point, made some eight years earlier, that in the *barbares* we find 'the least of the human', and typical of the way the designation is applied throughout the narratives.¹⁶⁴ This same rhetorical designation is usually applied in descriptions of torture rituals and cannibalism. With their 'sacrilegious hands' the Iroquois tear into the bodies of the missionaries. The priests' bodies are considered blessed, set apart for God or divine instruments, and when the Amerindians cut them open for their hearts and blood, they are acting sacrilegiously and contrary to their human identity as persons made in the image and likeness of their Creator, as if cutting into God himself.

The 1649–1650 *Relation* that describes the murder of Garnier maintains this same rhetorical pattern, drawing a familiar distinction between the *barbares* who

¹⁶² Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), p. 55.

¹⁶³ Ragueneau, *Hurons* (1648–1649), pp. 50–51.

¹⁶⁴ Lalemant, *Hurons* (1639–1640), p. 32.

killed the priest and the *sauvages* who were his parishioners. Ragueneau writes that the enemy thought it ‘a crime to shed a tear’ and that:

These *barbares* insisted that their prisoners should go into captivity as if they were marching to their triumph. A poor Christian mother, who wept for the death of her child, was killed on the spot, because she still loved, and could not quickly enough stifle her natural feelings.¹⁶⁵

The grieving mother, killed by an Iroquois warrior ‘on the spot’, is said to have been murdered because ‘she still loved’. The author refers to her killer as a ‘*barbare*’; a rhetorical designation often used to accentuate what is least human in the behaviour of Amerindians, here because the Iroquois inhumanly killed the woman because she expressed natural human emotion. The Iroquois represses his own humanity and stifles the humanity of another.

Garnier is then shot, and ‘The *barbare* who had fired the shot stripped him of his cassock, and left him, wallowing in his own blood, so as to pursue other fugitives’.¹⁶⁶ Here again, the use of this rhetorical designation is heightened by Ragueneau’s use of *sauvages* when referring to Garnier’s evangelical labours in the villages. Within the same chapter, he attests to the virtues of the dead missionary in a passage in which the Amerindians are always referred to as *sauvages*: ‘Day and night he thought only of the conversion of the *sauvages* and of devoting his life to them, to his last breath’;¹⁶⁷ he would ‘Hurry after a single *sauvage*’,¹⁶⁸ such was his zeal for their conversion.¹⁶⁹

Ragueneau had little evidence from which to construct his very brief account of the death of Chabanel: the missionary was simply abandoned in the forest while fleeing an Iroquois war party with his fellow Amerindian Christians. Following his

¹⁶⁵ Ragueneau, *Hurons/Nouvelle-France* (1649–1650), p. 28.

¹⁶⁶ Ragueneau, *Hurons/Nouvelle-France* (1649–1650), pp. 29–30.

¹⁶⁷ Ragueneau, *Hurons/Nouvelle-France* (1649–1650), p. 36.

¹⁶⁸ Ragueneau, *Hurons/Nouvelle-France* (1649–1650), p. 42.

¹⁶⁹ Ragueneau, *Hurons/Nouvelle-France* (1649–1650), pp. 48–49.

speculation about Chabanel's fate, he muses on the dangers involved in evangelizing among the Amerindians:

When God, besides all this, retracts his sensible graces, and hides himself from a person who longs only for him, when he leaves him a prey to sorrowfulness, to disgusts, and repugnance of nature, these are trials that are not within the scope of ordinary virtue; and the love of God must be strong in a heart, if it is not to be subdued by them. Join to these the continual sight of dangers, in which we find ourselves at every moment, of attack by an enemy *barbare* who often will subject you to the sufferings of a thousand deaths, until the coming of death, who use only fire, and flames, and unspoken cruelties.¹⁷⁰

Obviously lacking specific details to explain the death of Chabanel, the author knows only that he was left alone in an area where Iroquois were thought to be. Presuming that the missionary is dead, Ragueneau thus extrapolates, and evokes the images of 'fire, flames, and unspeakable cruelties' inflicted upon many others by the 'enemy *barbares*'. His florid description, however, reinforces the idea that the cruelty of the Amerindians is behaviour that is 'repugnant to nature'. For when the Amerindians fall prey to their emotions and passion in violence and torture, they are behaving contrarily to their natural identity.

The use of designations of *sauvages* and *barbares* are thus an intentional part of the authors' rhetoric of martyrdom. Though the authors had great hope that a relationship with Christ in the Church would reorder this spiritual dilemma of the Amerindians, the Iroquois at this point are described as adamantly rejecting the missionaries' offer. They turn in on their own passions, rather than turning out towards God and their fellow man and embracing the God-given noble qualities that the authors believe to be present within them. The tragedy of their spiritual condition brings them to the point where they torture and kill those sent by God to help them escape their metaphysical condition.

¹⁷⁰ Ragueneau, *Hurons/Nouvelle-France* (1649–1650), pp. 60–61.

In these martyrdom accounts, the Amerindian *barbares* thus become a foil to the self-sacrificing decisions of the missionaries, who remain among the Amerindian peoples at the behest of the divine will, no matter the personal cost involved. The designations *sauvages* and *barbares* are key devices in the rhetoric of martyrdom, filled with religious meaning, identifying this human struggle in the Christian imagination between choosing to follow one's own desires and sacrificing those desires to follow God's will.

9. Conclusion

In these martyrdom accounts we find both the authors' sense that these eight missionaries had fulfilled their vocations in *Nouvelle-France*, and their fullest expression of the rhetoric of martyrdom. This rhetoric articulates a fundamental religious worldview: that to offer oneself fully and lovingly to God, to the point of death, is the ideal trajectory of mission, and that, in that sacred union with Christ crucified, sharing in his suffering, the missionaries were participating in an event which would bring salvation for themselves and for the Amerindian peoples. The authors suggest in each account that the divine will of God, which they continuously claim to seek, is that they should fully offer themselves to his service, and that part of the authentic living out of this mission inevitably involves their blood being spilled alongside his. The decision of the missionaries to remain with their congregants in the face of certain death, even, in the case of Chabanel, to remain in *Nouvelle-France* at all, and their patient response to the suffering that many of them endured, are described as examples of their true detachment, their spirit of abnegation, and their general disposition of self-annihilation before the divine will. The missionaries' union with the suffering Christ on the stage of violence is said to expiate their own sins and to increase their effectiveness among the Amerindians standing alongside them. The

wounds inflicted upon some speak louder and with greater efficacy than any word could, and their suffering is described as the seedbed of the new Church they were sent to establish.

Satan, too, is present, working to ensure that the missionaries die. And yet, in his supposed stirring of the torturers' hearts towards new levels of cruel violence, and as they became 'demons' or 'half-demons' at work, every wound in the flesh of these men only adds to what the authors describe as glorious events. The *barbares*, the torturers who inflict suffering and death, are also those who will ultimately benefit from the suffering of the missionaries. Their purported selfishness and lack of humanity as they uncontrollably inflicted pain upon the missionaries, is contrasted with the sufferers' willing acceptance, following the example of the model of human life, Jesus Christ. The divine and the missionary, Satan and the *barbares*, as presented in the martyrdom accounts participate together, reflecting the authors' belief that in death, for and with God, there will be new life. This fundamental premise, shaped by their religious experience and so clearly presented in the martyrdom accounts, is the substance of the rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Relations*. Indeed it marks practically all of their pages that we have examined, but finds its crowning articulation when it is applied in the descriptions of these men who were thought to have lived it out in their final acts of love.

CONCLUSION

The *Relations* were in their time, and remain today, texts that provide an important window into both the seventeenth-century French colonial project in *Nouvelle-France* and the first years of Canada's history. During the early modern period in France they were read with keen interest. And, over the last century, they have been compiled, painstakingly annotated, and translated into multiple languages, making them available to a much larger readership than ever before. Scholars have subsequently mined these texts to uncover the culture and history of early indigenous cultures and to refine Canada's historical narrative, as well as to identify notable missionaries and Amerindians judged worthy of Christian devotion. Nevertheless, despite their frequent use in academic research, no scholar has studied their narratives before to uncover how the texts were influenced by the religious worldview of the Jesuit authors who wrote them. This study has identified this worldview and illustrated how it has shaped the rhetorical landscape of the *Relations* written between 1632 and 1650.

Le Jeune, Brébeuf, Jogues, Le Mercier, Vimont, Jérôme Lalemant, and Ragueneau, shared an understanding of God, the human person, and the world, forged by their praying with the *Exercises* and sharpened by the particular vision of Jesuit life presented to them by Louis Lallemant. Entirely convinced that it was only in offering oneself completely to Christ crucified that any person could discover their true identity, purpose, and fulfilment, these authors interpreted all of their observations in the New World through this soteriological vision, and articulated it in what I have identified as a rhetoric of martyrdom. Striving to remain fixed on Jesus Christ, nailed to his cross, they took to heart Loyola's advice, seeking 'detachment'

from 'worldly love', and always wondering: 'what I ought to do and suffer for him'. While, at the same time, they held fast to Lallemand's fervent belief that an inner life of abnegation and self-offering to God, modelled on the life of Christ himself. A disposition that was thought to set the authentic trajectory of the Jesuit vocation, and to have brought about in each man a greater personal holiness that would incalculably increase his apostolic effectiveness.

Each author, half a world away from their geographical homeland, was nevertheless formed in the school of Lallemand to remain grounded within their religious imagination, 'never altogether [to] go abroad' from their inner dialogues with the divine. Their lives and evangelical labours in *Nouvelle-France*, filled with adversity, sacrifice, and death thus became the context in which their 'second conversion' was lived out, where they sought a deeper unity with the suffering Christ and offered themselves as an oblation to God. Raising their experiences of the New World onto this metaphysical plane, the authors combined their inner religious narratives with the events surrounding their mission, and expressed the joining of these two realities upon the pages of the *Relations*. They expressed this rhetoric of martyrdom in four common places, or characters, 'God', the 'missionary', 'Satan', and the '*sauvages*' or '*barbares*'.

As Lallemand suggested, God, in Jesus Christ, chose no other means to redeem the world than to offer himself on the cross. The Jesuit authors expressed the desire of all the missionaries to follow this example; but they also proposed that their suffering and Christ's suffering could meet, as a transcendental bridge that united them all the more together. As we have seen, they understood that *Nouvelle-France* was a 'country of the Cross' filled with discomforts, physical dangers, and the constant threat of death at the hands of the Amerindians. Yet they believed that their

voluntarily embrace of these sufferings would ensure their growth in personal sanctity. Indeed, they thought that crosses and afflictions were a part of the 'eternal council of God', and therefore a blessing to be embraced. In lovingly suffering for God, they claimed to be granted safe passage through the wilds, conversions among the Amerindian peoples, miraculous healings, and even the expiation of their own past sins. They consistently asserted that then, just as in the early days of Christianity, their martyrdoms would form the mystical foundation of the fledgling Amerindian Church. Their description of the suffering that missionaries imposed upon themselves through vows, penances and mortification, or any suffering that was inflicted upon them by others, was rhetorically fashioned as an inherent and essential part of their mission through which God would achieve his ultimate goal.

Satan was considered by these authors to be the supreme spirit of evil and the enemy of human nature. Spurred on by his hatred of God, he was thought to have worked tirelessly against the missionaries in *Nouvelle-France*, which on several occasions they also described as the 'Empire of Satan'. The devil strove to maintain his perceived hold over the Amerindian peoples by keeping them ignorant of God, subject to their passions, fixated on physical gratification, and fearful. Their religious devotion to material objects was encouraged by the 'prince of lies', who applied supernatural results to their rituals and dreams, encouraging the Amerindians to worship what they saw as their deities while actually worshipping him. In this battle for souls, the authors wrote that the missionaries, along with their Christian community, suffered sickness, slander and adamant opposition instigated by the devil. They wrote that some Christians were warned by frightening spectres to abandon the Christian faith, while a few others had been possessed. Several missionaries claimed that demons attacked them too in the form of aggressive spectres, beasts, and

creatures of the night. Satan encouraged among the Amerindians a life of sin and human degradation in direct opposition to the life of self-offering to God espoused by the missionaries, and introduced as many obstacles and as much suffering as was possible to prevent any change of the *status quo*. This rhetorical staging of the devil in the *Relations* presented his successes, both spiritual and physical, as wounds inflicted on the missionaries and their fellow Christians – as sufferance received on the cosmic battlefield where the armies of Christ and the devil fought for the souls of the Amerindian peoples.

The authors presented the Amerindians as persons made in the image of God, and fully capable of living a Christian life. They often praised their prowess, ingenuity, rhetorical skills, and hospitality. They identified in the Amerindians, and in some of their traditions, seminal qualities that could in the future develop into a great civilization. Aware of both ancient and early modern ideas of the terms *sauvages* and *barbares*, further informed by Acosta's writing, they employed these designations in their own rhetorical fashion, governed by their religious experience. Believing that the mystery of Christ's suffering and death is an absolute and transcendental model for every person, the missionaries sought to help the Amerindians to grow in a disposition of loving self-offering to God. Indeed it was thought that a lack of this disposition in *Nouvelle-France*, a perceived self-centeredness encouraged by Satan, was a pervasive problem of pandemic proportions. As a result, the authors generally referred to the Amerindians as *sauvages*; when they behaved in ways that selfishly placed inordinate emphasis on personal desires, passions, food, material possessions, sex, retribution, violence, torture, and murder, they were consistently referred to as *barbares*. Jérôme Lalemant and Vimont made this integration of the authors' religious worldview and their rhetorical style clear.

The former informed the reader that in Amerindians who behave like *barbares*, we see ‘the least of the human’; and the latter proclaimed that there is no longer any barbarism in a heart where the love for the cross of Christ dwells. A part of the rhetoric of martyrdom employed by the authors, the designation *barbares* indicated the failure of some Amerindians to move beyond the materiality of this world, and to offer themselves instead to the divine aspirations of God; a disposition the authors understood to be an inherent part of what it meant to live out one’s human identity fully.

These four characters dramatically come together in the martyrdom accounts of Jogues, Goupil, de Lalande, Brébeuf, Lalemant, Daniel, Garnier, and Chabanel. In the climax of the authors’ narratives, God, the missionaries, Satan, and the Amerindians were gathered on a literary plain filled with torture, pain, and death, but also with love and grace. In these accounts, it is believed to be God’s will that missionaries should accept death for the expiation of their past sins and for the salvation of the Amerindian peoples. As was revealed in Jogues’ vision, poignant parallels were made between the rods held by his torturers and the rod of God with which lovingly beat him in the celestial halls of justice. The martyred missionaries are presented as men passionate about the principal dictum of the *Exercices*: ‘seeking and finding the will of God’. Even when faced with death, the missionaries had accepted his will above their own. They had refused to escape the hands of their enemies, choosing instead to remain with their fellow Christians, and understanding their captivity, torture, and death to be the highest form of self-abnegation and self-offering to their Creator. Their martyrdoms are thus presented as a sharing in the suffering of Jesus Christ, a mystical union that enflamed a deeper love between them and their crucified Lord. Upon this ground, the martyrs were gifted with joy, peace,

extraordinary courage, moving eloquence, and ‘angelic countenance’. The blood of Brébeuf is thus said to have preached with greater effect than any words could have done; the torture Jogues endured is presented as a balm that will heal the souls of his torturers; Daniel is granted many souls from purgatory as he met God in heaven.

This sacred space described by the authors is not void of the profane, and the presence of Satan’s forces is reiterated when the martyrs’ torturers are referred to as ‘demons’ or ‘half-demons’ – believed to be lost in a sadistic frenzy of violence that was spurred on by the devil’s hope to quash their evangelical efforts. In some cases, they are described as being dragged into the hellish places of their torture by demons. The Amerindians are said to have torn away the prisoner’s flesh with demonic rage. Though the missionaries’ abductions are seen as a temporary triumph for Satan, Ragueneau proclaims that the devil is in fact defeated when the missionaries willingly offer their lives to God. The designation ‘half-demons’ sits alongside the other, *barbares*, their cruel, sadistic, and murderous behaviour manifesting the ‘least of the human’. Having violently rejected the missionaries, they rejected God, and subsequently also their own human identity. The missionaries were robbed, abducted, stripped naked, verbally assaulted, beaten, dismembered, burned, flailed, eaten alive, hacked to death or set aflame; their torturers are designated not as *sauvages* but as *barbares*. A condition dramatically contrasted in the martyrdom accounts with the missionaries’ willing acceptance of their condition, following what they believed to be the true definition of human life, offering themselves body and soul to God.

This narrative is presented to the readers of the *Relations* not simply to keep them apprised of on-going developments in *Nouvelle-France*, or to engender support for the Jesuit mission, or again to encourage migration to the colony but, most importantly to, as Ignatius had directed a century before, ‘edify’ them. Presenting the

day-to-day lives of the missionaries – with their failures and successes, sufferings and joys, as well as deaths, with the conviction that new life would follow – they extend their mystical landscape of the ‘Kingdom of the Cross’ out into the religious imagination of early modern France. Not taking the form of a published sermon, spiritual manual, or theological treatise, the extraordinary exploits of the missionaries humbly presented in the *Relations* illustrate to the reader that the inner world of the human soul is a space from which they can ‘never altogether go abroad’.

The spiritual journey of the Amerindian peoples presented throughout the narrative is in fact one shared with the reader since the movement from disordered affections to a focus on the divine will, selfishness to selflessness, towards a deeper union with Christ crucified, is a trajectory the authors believed to be for every person. The reader is shown on the pages of the *Relations* lives that testified to the ardent belief that one can only discover his or her true purpose of existence through a loving relationship with Jesus Christ and that, the deeper this union grows, the more one will share in the mystery of His cross that is an inherent part of both His identity and mission to redeem the world. As such, the authors’ illustrate that suffering will come, as it did for Christ, in some form of rejection, or calumny, or persecution, or even death. It may come as a divine opportunity presented by God or as the result of Satan’s envy. Indeed choosing to live a life following Christ will inevitably bring about the scorn of the devil and often the calumny of the world that he tries to rule in God’s place. These attacks will be real and will always be set on destroying any effort to discover and live out God’s will. Should one decide to follow Christ on mission, Satan will not stop at setting obstacles to barricade the divine road that has been chosen.

On the pages of the *Relations* the authors' experience of God, formed by the *Exercices*, the 'Louis Lallemant School' of spirituality, their education, and the larger religious movements of early modern France, comes to life amidst extraordinary circumstances of adversity and death. It is thus a form of devotional literature that reveals to the reader that interiority and a true vision of the world, self-abnegation and self-discovery, annihilation and union with God, suffering and gift, the Cross of Christ and the fruits of evangelization, are mysteries to be embraced in their own lives. The rhetoric of martyrdom presented by the authors of the *Relations* is therefore not only an expression of their own personal religious experience but also their invitation to the reader to join them in walking with Christ, 'under the banner of his cross'.

While scholars have studied the *Relations* for many years, the very particular religious worldview of their authors has been largely ignored. In examining the editions written between 1632 and 1650, I have attempted to remedy this, to place the religious experience of their authors within the larger spiritual movements and Jesuit missionary efforts of their time, to identify how their spiritual formation in both the *Exercices* and Louis Lallemant's school of spirituality formed their religious imaginations, to illustrate how that world-view is reflected in what they wrote and the rhetoric of martyrdom that developed from it. I hope I have demonstrated how it is essential to read these texts with an awareness of their authors' understanding of God, and to have provided deeper insight into their narratives by showing how this understanding shaped the ways in which they both interpreted and articulated their experiences among the Amerindian peoples in *Nouvelle-France*.

It is my intention to proceed along these lines. I have nearly completed a new anthology of the *Relations* with an introduction that outlines some of the ideas found

in this study; a project intended to illustrate to the reader the importance of experiencing these narratives as much as possible from within the religious imaginations of their authors. I have also begun to examine the Jesuit François du Crux's *Historia Canadensis* (1664) for a similar rhetoric of martyrdom, and have the long-term goal of examining the remaining *Relations* (1651-1673) to see whether or not subsequent authors continue this same rhetoric.

It is my hope that the larger scholarly community will ensure that they themselves have properly grasped the religious worldview presented in the *Spiritual Exercises*, incorporating it into their analysis of the *Relations* – and indeed of any early modern Jesuit mission literature. That anthropologist and historians of colonial history will examine this global body of mission literature, and the observations they present, in a manner that includes the particular perspective found through Loyola's lens onto the world. And, when examining these texts, that theologians and historians will both brave the ever-expanding gulf set between them, meeting each other on the pages of works like the *Relations*, where the authors themselves have made no distinction between historical events and divine action.

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