

in the midst of sufferings that, on the first day of his captivity, he baptized fourteen Hurons,—one of whom died at the very hour in his arms, for he had been mortally wounded in the fight. He confessed the others who were already Christians, and urged them all to suffer bravely, and for the love of God, the tortures that would inevitably be inflicted on them. There was not one who did not consider himself happy in his misfortune, at seeing a man who had so soon inspired all their hearts, and made the road to Heaven so short and so easy for them.

The Father continued always to perform these charitable acts, and he did so all the more eagerly because he knew very well that the time of the greatest sufferings was approaching. In fact, after six or seven days' journey they met [17] a band of three hundred Iroquois warriors, who stripped our French and practiced a thousand cruelties on them and on the Hurons. They tore off the nails of all of them; they cut off the fingers of some, and pierced the hands of others; to dry the blood, they applied to their wounds lighted firebrands and torches, and stones heated red-hot in the fire; they sawed their arms with ropes until these reached the bone; they slashed their thighs with knives and swords. Finally, there was not one who did not receive almost as many blows as there were Iroquois, with the exception of two young children and a young girl returning from the Seminary of the Ursulines in Kebec, who were not injured. This was the first treatment received by those unfortunate captives, who, ever encouraged by the Father, blessed God amid their sufferings, and prepared themselves for still greater cruelties.