

Excerpts taken from the *Jesuit Relations*
comprising a narrative by St. Isaac Jogues
of the
Execution & Martyrdom of Heroic Huron Convert
– Eustace Ahatsistari –
captured by raiding Iroquois, 3 August 1642

The Speech of Eustache¹ Ahatsistari the Day Before His Capture
with Father Jogues & Companions

One of the Huron Martyrs who was captured along with Fr. Jogues, René Goupil and Guillaume Couture, was the famous brave, Eustache Ahatsistari. He had been baptized just four months previously on the Holy Saturday of 1642, after seeking it for three years. He was burned to death in the Mohawk village of Teonontogen – adjacent to what is now called Auriesville – within a month of his capture.

The day before their capture by the Iroquois, Eustache Ahatsistari gave this stirring exhortation:

“My brothers, if I fall into the hands of the Iroquois, I cannot hope for life. But, before I die, I will ask them what the Europeans² bring into their country – axes, kettles, blankets, arquebuses³, that is all. I will tell them that those people do not love them. That they conceal from them the most precious merchandise of all, which the French give without selling it to us: that the latter come to tell us of an eternal life; of a God who has made all; of a fire that is under the earth, prepared for those who do not honor Him; of a place of happiness in Heaven, an immortal abode for our souls, and for our bodies, which will rise again, freed from suffering. Then I will tell them that herein is my consolation; that they may inflict all their torments on me; that they may, by dint of torture, tear my soul from my body, but not from my heart this hope that after death, I shall be blessed. This will I preach to them, while they are burning me.”

Indeed, and while he was being burned to death, late in the summer of 1642, he urged his fellow Hurons not to let his death be an obstacle to future peace with the Iroquois.

The day before his capture along with Fr. Jogues, the *donnés* René Goupil & Guillaume Couture, Eustache Ahatsistari concluded his remarks with this address to fellow-convert, Charles Tsondatsaa:

1 The older texts in English spell his name with an “h”, thus “Eustache”.

2 Meant are the non-Catholics, mainly the Dutch of the region.

3 An early type of portable gun supported on a tripod or a forked rest.

“My brother, if God should permit that I be taken by the enemy, and that thou shouldst escape, when thou shall reach our country, go and see my brothers and my relatives on my behalf: Thou shalt tell them that if they have any love for me, and still more for themselves, they must embrace the Faith, and adore that Divine Majesty which is invisible to our eyes, but which makes Itself felt in the very depths of our souls, when we do not refuse to see Its light, and when we submit our wills to Its commands. Tell them that I am convinced of the truths of our Faith, and that we shall be separated from each other forever, if they are not among the followers of God; that He alone is my hope; and that, wherever I may be, I wish to live and to die in Him.”

Christian Huron Eustache Ahatsistari. baptized April 19, 1642, martyred 4 ½ months later by fire in the Mohawk village adjacent to Auriesville – his body finally beheaded.

Through the prayers of our fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, save us!

“Nobody makes pilgrimage alone.”

“*In unione orationum.*”

“Now is the acceptable time.”

19th annual



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Narrative compiled by R. Swiatkowski, edited by G. Lloyd.

Quotations of St. Isaac Jogues' account of the execution of Huron convert-martyrs after capture August, 1642, cf. the *Jesuit Relations*, French & English edition in 73 vols., Pagent Book Co., New York 1959, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites; specifically, vol. 39, pp. 175-225. Cf. Also *Perils of the Ocean and Wilderness*, by John Gilmary Shea, Patrick Donahoe, Boston, pp. 16-22.

The oration of Eustache Ahasistari the day before his capture with Fr. Jogues is taken from the same *Jesuit Relations*, Pagent Book Co., New York 1959, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites; vol. 26, pp. 183-185.

Please report *errata* to [G. Lloyd](mailto:G.Lloyd), who is responsible for any errors herein.