

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint John de La Lande

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: October 19

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IN BRIEF

Saint John de La Lande

Young layman from Dieppe in the service of the Jesuits, martyred in New France in 1646.

Feast day	October 19
Born	c. 1619-1620, Dieppe, Normandy, France
Died	October 19, 1646 (or the evening before), Ossernenon, present-day Auriesville, New York
Canonized	canonized June 29, 1930, by Pius XI
Era	17th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint John de La Lande for Lay Servants of the Church

Novena to Saint John de La Lande

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint John de La Lande

Saint John de La Lande was a young Norman layman, born in Dieppe around 1619, who devoted his life to serving the Jesuit missionaries in New France. A companion of Saint Isaac Jogues on his last mission to the Mohawks, he was killed at the village of Ossernenon, in present-day New York State, in October 1646. He is one of the eight North American Martyrs, canonized in 1930. His feast day is October 19, with his companions.

Who was Saint John de La Lande?

John de La Lande was neither a priest nor a religious. He was a *donné*, that is, a layman who bound himself by contract to serve the Jesuit missions without pay, for life, in exchange for his keep. The donnés shared the missionaries' life, their journeys and their dangers, and took care of a thousand practical tasks: carrying baggage, building, farming, nursing. John was the youngest of the eight North American Martyrs. He was about twenty-seven when he died.

We know him mainly through the *Jesuit Relations*, the reports the missionaries sent to France each year. The one for 1647 tells of his death and that of Isaac Jogues.

Key dates

- **Around 1619-1620**: Born in Dieppe, Normandy, a port from which many ships sailed for Canada.
- **Youth**: He offers himself as a donné to serve the Jesuit missionaries and sails for New France.
- **1640s**: He lives at Trois-Rivières, a French post on the Saint Lawrence.
- **September 1646**: He volunteers to accompany Father Isaac Jogues on a peace mission to the Mohawks.

- **October 1646**: The two men are captured and taken to Ossernenon; Isaac Jogues is killed on October 18.
- **October 19, 1646**: John de La Lande is killed in his turn, on the evening of October 18 or the morning of the 19th.
- **June 21, 1925**: Beatified with the other North American Martyrs by Pius XI.
- **June 29, 1930**: Canonized by Pope Pius XI.

A layman in the service of the mission

In the seventeenth century, the Jesuits of New France lived among the native peoples to announce the Gospel to them: the Huron-Wendat, the Algonquin, the Iroquois. Their mission was hard and dangerous. The donnés were discreet but essential players in it. John de La Lande chose this life out of love for Christ, seeking neither glory nor wages. He worked at Trois-Rivières, in contact with both the French and the native peoples.

Isaac Jogues' last mission

Father Isaac Jogues had already been a prisoner of the Mohawks in 1642 and had seen his companion, Saint René Goupil, die before his eyes. Back in France, mutilated, he had returned to Canada. In 1646, after a peace treaty, the Jesuit superior, Jérôme Lalemant, sent him again to the Mohawks to found a mission there. He knew he was risking his life. John de La Lande offered to go with him, fully aware of the danger.

They set out in September 1646. But the situation among the Mohawks had changed: an epidemic and a bad harvest had been blamed on the missionaries, and part of the people, notably the Bear clan, had turned hostile. The two travelers were captured and taken to Ossernenon.

The martyrdom

On October 18, 1646, Isaac Jogues was invited into a longhouse and struck down with a hatchet as he entered. John de La Lande, who understood the danger, stayed faithful. According to the Jesuit account, he went out during the night to recover his companion's body or belongings, and was killed in his turn with a tomahawk. The bodies of the two martyrs were thrown into the river.

John de La Lande could have fled or stayed out of harm's way. He chose to stay close to the man he served, to the end.

Devotion and iconography

John de La Lande was canonized by Pius XI on June 29, 1930, with his seven companions: John de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, Gabriel Lalemant, Anthony Daniel, Charles Garnier, Noël Chabanel and René Goupil. Their feast is celebrated on October 19 in the universal Church and on September 26 in Canada, of which they are secondary patrons. Relics of John de La Lande are kept at the Notre-Dame Basilica-Cathedral of Quebec and at the Martyrs' Tower in Saint-Célestin, Quebec. Two parishes and two municipalities in Quebec bear the name Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande. He is shown as a young layman, with the other martyrs, in stained glass windows and paintings in Canada and the United States.

What can we learn from Saint John de La Lande?

John de La Lande is a lay saint, young, with no title or office in the Church. He put his life at the service of others, in tasks that were often humble, and he was faithful to the point of martyrdom. He reminds us that the Church's mission does not rest only on priests: it needs generous laypeople, ready to give their time, their skills and sometimes their lives. You can pray to him for young people, for volunteers and committed laypeople, and for missionaries.

To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint John de La Lande and the novena to Saint John de La Lande.

Where to pray to Saint John de La Lande

- **Auriesville** (New York): the site of the former village of Ossernenon, the place of his martyrdom and that of Isaac Jogues and René Goupil, where a shrine has been built.
- **Midland** (Ontario): the Martyrs' Shrine, near the former mission of Sainte-Marie among the Hurons.
- **Quebec**: the Notre-Dame Basilica-Cathedral, which keeps some of his relics.
- **Dieppe** (Seine-Maritime, France): his native city, a port from which many settlers and missionaries sailed for New France.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint John de La Lande for Lay Servants of the Church

Saint John de La Lande was a young layman from Dieppe who gave himself, without pay and for his whole life, to the service of the Jesuit missionaries in New France. In 1646 he accompanied Saint Isaac Jogues to the Mohawks and was killed at Ossernenon, the day after his companion's death. This prayer is an original composition inspired by his life, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to his intercession laypeople who serve the Church, young people seeking their way and missionaries.

Prayer to Saint John de La Lande

Saint John de La Lande,
young man of Dieppe,
you crossed the ocean to serve the Gospel,
not as a priest, but as a brother who gives himself,
carrying burdens, sharing the roads and the dangers.

When Isaac Jogues set out on his last mission,
you offered to go with him,
knowing the price it might cost.
You remained faithful to death,
and joined your companion in glory.

Pray for laypeople who give their time and strength to the Church,
for volunteers, catechists, helpers of every kind.
Pray for young people seeking what to give their lives to:
may they dare a generous and lasting gift.
Pray for missionaries and for peace between peoples.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint John de La Lande

- On his feast day, October 19, or September 26 in Canada.
- Before taking on volunteer service, in your parish or elsewhere.
- For a young person discerning a vocation or looking for a path.
- When you must stay faithful to a friend or a commitment despite danger or difficulty.
- For lay missionaries who have gone far from home.

A prayer of self-giving

The word *donné*, "given," sums up the life of John de La Lande. You can make this short offering your own:

> *Lord, I give myself to you, without calculation and without return.*
> *Make my life a service.*
> *Saint John de La Lande, pray for me. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint John de La Lande from October 11 to 19, and read the life of Saint John de La Lande.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint John de La Lande

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint John de La Lande, a young lay martyr of New France in 1646. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, October 19, begin on October 11; in Canada, where he is celebrated on September 26, you can begin on September 18. It is especially suited to young people, committed laypeople and all who want to learn to give themselves. You can pray it at any time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and entrust your intention to God. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint John de La Lande, pray for us." The suggested act helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A young man from Dieppe

John was born in a Norman port from which ships sailed for Canada. He grew up with the horizon of the sea and tales of distant lands. God uses our history and our roots to call us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the place and the family where I was born. Help me to hear your call through my own story.

Today: Give thanks for a person or a place that marked your childhood.

Day 2: Giving oneself

John became a *donné*: he committed himself to serve the missions for life, without pay. It was a radical choice. He kept nothing for himself, neither his time, nor his strength, nor his future.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to give myself without counting the cost. Free me from the fear of losing something.

Today: Give an hour of your time to a person or an organization.

Day 3: Crossing the ocean

John left France for an unknown country, with a harsh climate, weeks away by sea. He accepted discomfort and distance for the sake of the Gospel.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who have left their country, by choice or by necessity. Give me the courage to step out of my comfort zone.

Today: Pray for missionaries, and for the migrants in your town.

Day 4: Humble tasks

At Trois-Rivières, John carried, built, repaired and helped. This obscure work made the priests' mission possible. In the Church, there is no small service.

Prayer: Lord, I offer you the humble tasks of my days. May they serve your Kingdom.

Today: At home or in your parish, do a task nobody likes to do.

Day 5: "I will go with him"

When Isaac Jogues was sent to the Mohawks, John volunteered to go with him. He knew the mission was dangerous. He would not let his friend go alone.

Prayer: Lord, make me a faithful friend, who does not leave others alone in trial.

Today: Accompany someone through a difficult step: a visit, an appointment, a trial.

Day 6: Peacemakers

The 1646 mission was meant to strengthen peace between the French and the Mohawks. John and Isaac Jogues set out as messengers of peace among divided peoples.

Prayer: Lord, make me a peacemaker wherever there is division, mistrust or resentment.

Today: Make a gesture of reconciliation toward someone you are in conflict with.

Day 7: Captives

Captured and taken to Ossernenon, John and Isaac Jogues did not know what awaited them. In uncertainty, they stayed together and put themselves in God's hands.

Prayer: Lord, when I do not know what tomorrow holds, keep me in trust and peace.

Today: Pray for hostages and for those unjustly imprisoned.

Day 8: Faithful to the end

After the death of Isaac Jogues, John could have hidden. According to the Jesuit account, he went out in the night to see to his companion's body or belongings, and was killed in his turn. His faithfulness went beyond his friend's death.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be faithful to my commitments, even when it costs.

Today: Honor a commitment you have tended to neglect.

Day 9: The glory of the martyrs

John de La Lande joined Isaac Jogues, René Goupil and the other North American Martyrs. The young layman from Dieppe is honored by the universal Church. His life, given away, bore fruit.

Prayer: Lord, may my life bear fruit for your Kingdom. Through the intercession of Saint John de La Lande, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Pray for the native peoples of America and for reconciliation.

Living the novena with Saint John de La Lande

Saint John de La Lande is an approachable model: a young layman, without theological studies, who simply said yes. During these nine days, ask yourself what you are giving your time and strength to. You can pray this novena for a young person seeking their way, for a tired volunteer, or for yourself if you hesitate to commit. Think also of the native peoples of North America, their often painful history, and pray for peace and reconciliation.

Closing prayer

Saint John de La Lande,
young layman given to the service of the Gospel,
you accompanied your friend to martyrdom.
Present to God the intention I have carried during these nine days.
Teach me to give myself without calculation,
to serve in humble tasks,
and to remain faithful when the road becomes dangerous.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

You can also pray the prayer to Saint John de La Lande at any time, and read the life of Saint John de La Lande.

Credits and sources

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