

Day 3

Wendat Culture

A Profound Knowledge of the Language

St-Jean de Brébeuf:

“We need workers, not so much for the harvest as to sow the seed, or rather to learn the language to be able to preach the word of God. For, without a profound knowledge of the Huron language, they will not be able to sow the seed or gather in the harvest.”

Spiritual Beliefs of the Wendat

Brébeuf's quote

“Their belief in dreams is unbelievable, and if Christians were to put into practice every divine inspiration with as much care as these natives carry out their dreams, these Christians would soon reach high sanctity. The natives take their dreams as irrevocable commands and decrees, and consider it a serious crime to postpone their execution. This winter one of the natives of our village dreamt, during his early hours of sleep, that he had to stage a feat immediately; so, right in the middle of the night he got up and came to wake us up and to borrow one of our kettles. The dream is the oracle which these poor people consult and heed, the Prophet who foretells their future, the Cassandra who warns them of impending disasters, the only Doctor for their every sickness, the Aesculapius and Galen of the entire region; it is the most absolute master they have. If a chieftain argues for one side and a dream for another, it is of no use for the Chieftain to shout his head off. It will be the dream that is obeyed. The dream is their Mercury on their trips, their Treasurer in their families; it presides over their councils; trading, fishing and hunting are conducted under its guidance and are undertaken almost only to fulfill their dreams. They are not so attached to anything as not to give it up gladly if required to do so in a dream. If they have had a successful hunt, or if they return with their canoes full of fish, all this is subject to the judgment of the dream. A dream will sometimes wipe out their

food supplies for a whole year. It prescribes their feasts, dances, games. Briefly, in these matters, the dream does everything and is really the principal god of the Wendats.”

Scripture Passages for Personal Prayer Time:

A profound knowledge of the Huron language:

“These is a large harvest, but few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest.” (*Luke* 10, 1-12)

“I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging of bell.” (1 *Corinthians* 13. 1-12)

Their beliefs:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the most important commandment.” (*Matthew* 22. 34-40)

“Praise the Lord, my soul! O Lord, my God, how great you are! You are clothed with majesty and glory; you cover yourself with light.” (*Psalms* 104)

Possible Questions for Personal Reflection:

1. Am I able to recognize and appreciate the gifts and culture of others?
2. What in this world is really of eternal value to me?
3. How can I understand the “living together” within my community?
4. Do I take a stand for faith in a culture whose values are not Christian?
5. How can I live and show my solidarity with indigenous peoples?