

# Jubilee, Liturgy, and the Early History of Canada

[New France, Quebec]

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This is the first in a series of studies on Liturgy, Music and Culture in Canada ca. 1530-ca.1670.

Frank Henderson's Page on Liturgy and Medieval Women

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## Contents

Introduction

The Jubilee Holy Year 1625

The Jubilee Holy Year 1650

Extraordinary Jubilees

Extraordinary Jubilees by Extension

Extraordinary Jubilee on the Election of Urban VIII (1624)

Extraordinary Jubilee on the Election of Innocent X (1645)

Extraordinary Jubilee on the Election of Alexander VII (1657)

Extraordinary Jubilees for Special Occasions and Needs

Extraordinary Jubilee of 1618

Extraordinary Jubilee of 1648

Extraordinary Jubilee of 1653

Extraordinary Jubilee of 1664

Conclusions

Notes

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## Introduction

As the great jubilee year 2000 approaches, we may wonder how jubilees were celebrated in the past. In particular, we may ask what role jubilees might have played in the religious lives of Aboriginal and French Catholics during the early stages of evangelization and European settlement of what is now Canada - then, New France.

Since 1450 it had been the practice of popes to declare *jubilee holy years* every 25 years. The first two such occasions after the beginning of permanent European settlement of New France would therefore have been in 1625 and 1650. Another type of jubilee - the *extraordinary jubilee* - was also celebrated in Canada during this period. We will consider both.<sup>1</sup>

Jubilees were, at least in part, liturgical celebrations (as liturgy was understood and experienced in the seventeenth century); they had communal as well as individual dimensions. Participants heard preaching that stirred the soul, went to confession, attended mass and received communion, joined liturgical processions, celebrated benediction of the blessed sacrament, heard vespers, and sang hymns litanies and psalms. Relatively full descriptions of the experiences of persons who celebrated certain jubilees are given below. Abbreviated accounts of other jubilees can be filled out in our imaginations based on the cumulative record.

Information on jubilees in early New France comes entirely from the city of Quebec and its environs during the period 1618-1664. Important primary sources for the first part of this period include Gabriel Sagard's *Histoire du Quebec* and his *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*,<sup>2</sup> and Chrestien Le Clercq's *First Establishment of the Faith in New France*.<sup>3</sup> Important primary sources for the second part include the *Jesuit Journal* (1645-1668) and *Jesuit Relations* (1632-1673).<sup>4</sup> Secondary sources on the history of New France provide background and context.<sup>5</sup>

## The Jubilee Holy Year 1625

By custom, Urban VIII (pope 1623-1644) would have announced the forthcoming jubilee holy year in the spring of 1624, on the feast of the Ascension. The pope's proclamation of this jubilee holy year presumably reached New France via the Recollet missionaries (a branch of Franciscans), though no reference to this has been found in the surviving records. It will be shown below that such documents usually did reach Canada, however.

Who was there to receive the notification of the jubilee holy year? The only settlement in New France then was Quebec, founded in 1608 by Samuel de Champlain. The small population of perhaps 60-100 persons included two missionaries of the Recollet order. The Recollets had arrived in 1615 and by 1625 had a house, church and farm on the banks of the St. Charles River, a tributary of the St. Lawrence. In addition to the "headquarters" building, the Habitation, the only private house was that of the Hebert family - Louis, Marie, their daughter Guillemette, who had married in 1621, and a young

son. The family had arrived in 1617, had cleared land, and now had a productive farm. Louis was also an apothecary and “king’s attorney.”<sup>6</sup>

The proclamation of the jubilee holy year was essentially an invitation to go on pilgrimage to Rome, for it was only in Rome that the plenary indulgence that was a focus for the holy year could be gained. Anyone who wanted to go to Rome from Canada would first have traveled by sea to France, and then overland. Certainly there was regular ship traffic; Samuel de Champlain and various Recollet friars travelled back and forth frequently.<sup>7</sup> The westward voyage took two to three months and the eastward voyage, one to two months.

The cost and hazards of such a voyage, as well as the amount of time required, would have made it unlikely that any did in fact travel from Canada just for the jubilee. May we not consider the possibility, however - or simply imagine - that persons who had returned to France from Canada in 1624 or early 1625 might have gone on to Rome to participate in it? At the very least, might they not have known persons who were pilgrims and heard about their experiences?

We know, for example, that Samuel de Champlain was in France from about October 1624 until late spring of the following year.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Recollet Friar Joseph LeCaron sailed for France in August 1625,<sup>9</sup> and might have been able to get to Rome for the end of the holy year. Both Recollet brother Gabriel Sagard<sup>10</sup> and Champlain’s wife Helene Boulee (perhaps with her three ladies in waiting and her maid)<sup>11</sup> returned to France permanently in 1624. Helene was particularly pious and might have wanted to make the pilgrimage to Rome; later she became a nun.. We also know that a party of Jesuits left Dieppe in April and arrived in Quebec in June, 1625 (priests Jean de Brebeuf, Charles Lalement and Enemond Masse and lay brothers Francois Charton and Gilbert Buree);<sup>12</sup> they might have been able to participate in the beginning of the Holy Year before departing on their missionary work. Finally, we need to consider the possibility that some Native Christians, sent to France by the Recollet missionaries, might have made the holy year pilgrimage to Rome. The young man named Pastedechouan, for example, came to France in 1620 and returned (reluctantly) in August 1626. His godfather, who also sponsored his studies, was the Prince de Guemenee; he could have afforded to send his godchild to Rome for the jubilee.<sup>13</sup>

Any “Canadian” who may have made pilgrimage to Rome would have taken part in the spiritual exercises required to obtain the holy year plenary indulgence. Typically these included hearing preaching, going to confession, mass and communion, hearing vespers, and visiting several prescribed Roman churches each day for 15 days, saying prayers for intentions specified by the pope. They stayed in hospices. Inhabitants of Rome would have slightly different requirements, including caring for the pilgrims and visiting the prescribed churches more often.

The eminent historian Ludwig Pastor provides the following information regarding the celebration of the jubilee holy year of 1625.<sup>14</sup> “In 1625 Urban VIII was able to celebrate the thirteenth Jubilee. The preparations began as early as the end of September, 1624. On November 13 th, the Cardinals were exhorted to see to it that their titular churches were in good condition and to take care that the persons in their service gave the pilgrims an edifying example. Special edicts dealing with the conduct of religious

were likewise issued.

“The Pope was indefatigable; he took measures for the importation of food, pleaded for support of the hospices of the pilgrims, especially of Trinita de Pellegrini, and provided special lodgings near St. Peter’s for foreign prelates. Cardinal Francesco Barberini, in his capacity of Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland established a separate hospice for pilgrims from those countries.

“Wladimir, son of Sigismund, King of Poland, was present at the opening of the Holy Door at Christmas, [1624].<sup>15</sup> The conqueror of the Turks and the Tartars was received with the greatest honours and on his return from Naples the Pope presented him with a consecrated sword and hat.

“Urban VIII repeatedly visited the churches designated for gaining the jubilee; several times also he took his place in the confessional at St Peter’s; he remained in it for an especially long time on Holy Saturday; twelve pilgrims were daily entertained at the Vatican; he distributed abundant alms, especially to the Confraternity of Trinita de Pellegrini. Twice he repaired thither to wash the feet of poor pilgrims. Like the Pope himself, his family also, especially Cardinal Francesco and Costanza Barberini, were particularly unwearied in their attention to the pilgrims, and the Romans vied with them in works of benevolence and piety.

“The precautionary measures against a possible outbreak of the plague as well as those for the provisioning of the city, proved most effective.<sup>16</sup> Notwithstanding the wars of the period, the number of pilgrims was relatively high - among them there were even a few eastern Bishops.

“For the benefit of the pilgrims the Pope had summoned eminent preachers to Rome.... The conduct of the pilgrims was exemplary and the frequentation of the Sacraments very great. ‘In our visits to the churches,’ Jerome Marchstaller, Benedictine Abbot of St. Paul in Carinthia, notes in his account of his pilgrimage, ‘we were specially struck with the devotion of the foreigners; we saw them praying fervently and with many tears. Nor were there wanting members of the nobility and the clergy of Rome, more especially noble ladies, who visited the sacred shrines on foot, bathed in perspiration....’”

For those who remained in Quebec, the jubilee holy year was noted in a negative manner: they could not gain any plenary indulgence to which they might otherwise have had access. Pastor explains: “In accordance with custom, all plenary Indulgences and the faculties of confessors outside Rome to absolve from sins reserved to the Sovereign Pontiff, were suspended and limited to Rome, through exceptions were made for religious women, the sick and prisoners, and the Portinucula Indulgence was likewise maintained.”<sup>17</sup>

There was, for example, at least one plenary indulgence that applied just to New France. The *Jesuit Journal* explains: “On the Sunday previous [to Dec 8, 1645], I announced plenary indulgence, by virtue of the bull of Paul 5 th, which is among the Hurons - whereby plenary indulgence is granted to all

our churches on the day of the patron or titular saint of the church.”<sup>18</sup> Paul V was pope from May 1605 to January 1621. The exact occasion on which this indulgence was granted is not known; in any case it would in effect have been canceled during 1625.

### **The Jubilee Holy Year 1650**

By 1650 there was a new pope, Innocent X. He proclaimed the jubilee on May 4, 1649 and sent additional letters to Catholic rulers in October.<sup>19</sup> This news might have arrived in Quebec on the last ship, in mid-September 1649. <sup>20</sup> If it did not arrive that year, it would have arrived in the first mail from France, which arrived in early July, 1650.<sup>21</sup>

Who was there to receive news of the jubilee holy year? By now New France included settlements in Port Royal, Montreal and Trois Rivieres, as well as Quebec. Trudel estimates a total population in 1645 of about 300 persons, with about 50 in Montreal and perhaps 200 in Quebec. Religious orders in Quebec now included the Jesuits (since 1625) and the Ursuline and Hospital Sisters (since 1639). It was a difficult period: Jean de Brebeuf had been killed the year before, and the Hurons who had been displaced by the Iroquois were trying to find safety. Surviving missionaries led about 300 hundred Hurons to Quebec, arriving on July 28. In the autumn of 1650 there were about 400 Hurons encamped near the Hotel Dieu; the Iroquois were becoming a constant threat and the fur trade was severely disrupted. By this time Guillemette Hebert and her husband had a large household - at least ten children plus several servants.<sup>22</sup>

Again, we may consider the possibility - or imagine - that any “Canadians” who were France in 1650 might have gone to Rome for the jubilee holy year. For example, we know that Jeanne Mance returned to France in 1650 on business, returning late in the year.<sup>23</sup> Charles-Joseph d’Ailleboust was in France for part of 1650, returning to Quebec in early September with additional troops for Montreal.<sup>24</sup> Jean-Paul Godofroy went to France in 1650 as well, as a “delegate” on official business.<sup>25</sup> Jean de Lauson probably was in France in 1650, as he was appointed governor in mid-January 1651; he returned to Quebec to take up his duties on October of 1651.<sup>26</sup> Finally, we may again consider the possibility that Native Canadians were in France as well. The only specific individual I have come across, Honattiate, however, died in January 1650.<sup>27</sup>

Ludwig Pastor provides the following information regarding this jubilee holy year.<sup>28</sup> “The Pope opened the Holy Door at St. Peter’s in person whilst a similar ceremony was being carried out at St. Paul’s by Cardinal Lante, at the Lateran by Cardinal Colonna and at St. Mary Major by Cardinal Maidalchini. Such was the concourse at St. Peter’s that the military had to be called out to maintain order, whilst at St. Mary Major, where this precaution had not been taken, Cardinal Maidalchini was in danger of being crushed by the crowd.

“Innocent X eagerly participated in the exercises prescribed for gaining the Indulgence: he visited the four prescribed churches on no less than sixteen occasions and not even bad weather deterred him from making these visits. In order to set a good example all the Cardinals, even the eighty year old

Lante, made their visits to the churches on foot. [Certain Cardinals] preached at S. Marcello, and the Pope also summoned distinguished preachers from outside Rome.

“Notwithstanding the continuation of the war between France and Spain and the tension in Italy arising out of Spanish military preparations, crowds of pilgrims came from all parts, among them even princely personages. ... Princess Margaret of Savoy arrived in May; she was dressed and traveled as an ordinary pilgrim and lodged at the Convent of Tor de Specchi.

“During the Holy Week and Easter services the splendour and majesty of the Church’s liturgy were seen in all their overwhelming grandeur. The Pope took a personal part in all the functions; on Maundy Thursday he performed the ceremony of the washing of the feet in the Sala Ducale but he likewise washed the feet of poor pilgrims in the [hospice] of Trinita de Pellegrini. The many Confraternities of the Eternal City vied with one another in the adornment of their churches. The altar of repose in the Spanish national church of S. Giacomo surpassed even that of the Vatican basilica; hundreds of lamps and candles formed a resplendent crown of glory around it. The Pantheon, the interior of which was adorned with religious pictures and thousands of lights, presented a fairylike spectacle. At the Good Friday procession the magnificent new banners of the Campo Santo attracted much notice; 12,500 pilgrims were counted in the procession of the Confraternity of Trinita de Pellegrini.

“Universal admiration was aroused by the decoration of Piazza Navona for the procession which was held there by the Spanish Confraternity of the Resurrection in the early hours of Easter Sunday morning (April 17). This ceremony, in which the Spanish ambassador was wont to take a conspicuous part, had fallen into abeyance during the pontificate of Urban VIII. The Roman Carlo Rinaldi turned the ancient *circus* of Domitian into a court surrounded by columns entwined with garlands of foliage and illumined by 1600 lights. Choirs of singers were stationed in the centre. At each end rose a magnificent pavilion given by the Castilians and the Aragonese; in one was seen a figure of the risen Saviour, in the other that of His Blessed Mother. A contemporary declares that this exhibition...was by itself alone worth the journey from Spain to Rome.

“Already by Easter the number of pilgrims was reckoned at 70,000. May witnessed the arrival of Confraternities from all parts of Italy, each with its own insignia and accompanied by the clergy and the civil authorities....

“The total number of pilgrims was estimated at 700,000, every one of whom stayed in the Eternal City for at least a fortnight. The consequence was that prices rose at first, but the Pope intervened in order to save the pilgrims from being imposed upon. For poor Bishops he had set aside a special hospice in the Borgo. As at former jubilees, this time also the hospice of Trinita de Pellegrini distinguished itself; eventually a bronze bust of Innocent X by Algardi was put up in the hostel in memory of the Pope’s benefactions. Even Olimpia put herself at the service of benevolence; she got forty-two ladies to collect money for the maintenance of the pilgrims.<sup>29</sup>

“The Pope did all in his power to assure the importation of provisions. On the occasion of his visits of the churches he showed such willingness to listen to those who drew near to him that the pilgrims were

filled with admiration. On November 24, 1650, he reduced the number of the prescribed visits to the churches and at the conclusion of the jubilee he extended it to the whole Catholic world for the following year.”

## **Extraordinary Jubilees**

Having described *jubilee holy years*, we may now consider the second category, that of *extraordinary jubilees*. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* explains: “It has long been customary to extend [the holy year plenary indulgence] the following year to the faithful throughout the world. For this, fresh conditions are appointed, usually a certain number of visits to local churches, sometimes fasting or other works of charity. Further, the popes have constantly exercised their prerogative of conceding to all the faithful indulgences *ad instar jubilaei* (after the model of a jubilee), which are commonly known as extraordinary Jubilees. These are [also] commonly granted by a newly elected pontiff at his accession or on occasion of some unwonted celebration or at times of great calamity.”<sup>30</sup> Thus there are extraordinary jubilees “by extension,” “on the election of a pope,” and “for special occasions and needs.” The celebration in Canada of each type will be considered in turn.

### **Extraordinary Jubilees by Extension**

The extension of the jubilee holy years of 1625 and 1650 would have been celebrated in Canada in 1626 or 1627 and in 1651 or 1652, respectively. I have not found any record of these. This is particularly noteworthy because fairly extensive records survive for 1651-1652. Did the appropriate documents of proclamation not reach Canada, were these simply ignored, or were they celebrated but not considered significant enough to record?

### **Extraordinary Jubilee on the Election of Urban VIII (1623)**

Urban VIII was elected pope on August 5, 1623.<sup>31</sup> There is no record of an extraordinary jubilee being celebrated in Canada on this occasion. However, records are scanty for this period.

### **Extraordinary Jubilee on the Election of Innocent X (1644)**

Innocent X was elected pope on September 15, 1644, his coronation was on October 4, and he “took possession” of the Lateran (his official residence and cathedral of Rome) on November 23, 1644.<sup>32</sup> News of his election and notification of a jubilee and plenary indulgence could not have reached Canada until the summer of 1645. The *Jesuit Relations* explains, “The confusion which the coming of the vessels occasions made us postpone the Jubilee of last year [1644] to a time more convenient for obtaining [the plenary indulgence] with more leisure; it was announced some days before the nativity of the Savior [1645].”<sup>33</sup> The *Jesuit Journal* simply announces, “On the 17<sup>th</sup> [of December, 1645], [we] began the jubilee granted by Innocent X.”<sup>34</sup>

We have quite a bit of information about this jubilee. It was celebrated by the French in Quebec, by the Native people in the nearby settlement of Sillery, and by both together in Quebec.

According to the records of the *Jesuit Journal*, the French people celebrated the jubilee in the following way.<sup>35</sup> (Because its account is condensed, not always in order, and describes liturgical practices that are no longer in use, I will paraphrase and enlarge rather than quoting it directly.)

The jubilee began on December 17, 1645, the third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete* Sunday); it concluded on December 31. The three “stations” - the three churches that had to be visited to gain the plenary indulgence - were the [Jesuit] parish church, the chapel of the Hospital Sisters, and the chapel of the Ursuline Convent.

Though the jubilee would ordinarily have begun with a liturgical procession, the *Jesuit Journal* states that “we made no procession here ... on the morning of that Sunday,” perhaps because of cold, stormy weather, or the depth of snow. On the closing day of the jubilee, the *Journal* records, “we thought of making a procession, but the winter season is not at all convenient for that.”

High Mass began with the customary blessing and sprinkling with water; the chant *Asperges me* would have been sung. The eucharistic liturgy was now interrupted by the singing of the hymn to the Holy Spirit, *Veni Creator*.<sup>36</sup> During this hymn, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and three cannon shots were fired to salute it.<sup>37</sup> This might have been done by placing a previously consecrated host in a monstrance and putting the monstrance on or above the altar; alternatively, the tabernacle door might simply have been opened and the veiled ciborium made visible. As this was being done, three cannon shots were fired from the fort by way of salute.

The remainder of the Mass was celebrated in the presence of the exposed sacrament. Violet vestments were used, suggesting that the mission did not yet have the pink vestments that were often used on *Gaudete* Sunday. The *Gloria* was not sung, as it was Advent. Because of the eucharistic exposition, extra collects (opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion) were added to those of the Sunday; these might have been taken from the Mass for Corpus Christi.

In the afternoon - around 2 p.m. - the celebration of the jubilee continued with vespers, which “was chanted by the priests.” Because of the presence of the exposed sacrament, it is noted that they did so “standing and bareheaded;” in ordinary circumstances they would have sat for the psalms, and worn their birettas. The people stood or knelt - the Governor stood - out of reverence for the exposed sacrament. Two candles were lit at the beginning of vespers, and six more were lit at the Magnificat. Toward the end of vespers, it appears that *O sacrum convivium* 38 and an extra collect were said following the regular prayer of the day.

Following vespers the hymn *Alma redemptoris* was sung; this is the evening hymn to Mary for Advent, usually sung following compline. Because compline was not said publicly, this hymn was moved to the end of vespers.

The remainder of the service of benediction of the blessed sacrament followed, though “a mistake was made herein.” It seems that the actual blessing of the people with the exposed sacrament (either in the monstrance or in a ciborium) followed immediately, after which there was a concluding prayer. The mistake that was recognized was that prior to the blessing, the hymn *Tantum ergo sacramentum* should have been sung and incense burned. Presumably, the blessed sacrament was then returned to the tabernacle.<sup>39</sup> After all this, “we ended with a *laudate*,”<sup>40</sup> and “the sermon was preached afterward.”

The *Journal* then states that “the blessed sacrament was exposed only on Sundays and feasts within the fortnight [that is, Dec. 17-31]; on working Days, it was not.” It goes on to say that benediction was celebrated at the other two stations, that is at the chapel of the Hospital Sisters and the chapel of the Ursuline Convent; this was done at four p.m., “one after the other,” in either order, “according to the convenience of the [Jesuit] superior. He preached at one of them, and then [left] after the benediction, and then went to the other [chapel]. Monsieur the Governor and the people followed.” Most likely, this describes what happened on every day that the Blessed Sacrament was exposed.

Another aspect of the jubilee, and one of the conditions for gaining the plenary indulgence, was the giving of alms. The *Journal* describes these practices among the French as follows. “The Ursulines among others, gave noble alms of cloth to the French and [Aboriginal] poor; as for us [the Jesuits], our chief alms were seven loaves, each of the value of 15 sols, for as many persons as we were in this house at Quebec; however that was exchanged for cloth, shoes, and linen, of which things the poor people had more need. Monsieur the Governor also gave generous alms: [First], two pistoles, given upon the spot - one of which, for the French poor, was exchanged for cloth. The other was left to the disposition of Father de Quen, for the poor [Native people] of Sillery. [Second], he gave orders to Monsieur des Chastelets to give what we should ask of him for the poor, up to the amount of 200 livres.”

While the French were celebrating the jubilee in Quebec, the Native peoples of the Montagnais tribe were also doing so in the nearby village of Sillery. Originally called St. Joseph, Sillery was founded and supervised by the Jesuits as a reserve for Native peoples about four miles west of Quebec. “It was a village where [Montagnais] were evangelized, given refuge, taught agriculture, and assimilated partially into French culture, however without daily contact with secular Frenchmen.”<sup>41</sup> The *Jesuit Journal* for 1645 gave the population of Sillery as follows: “There were at Sillery, this year, about 167 souls, all Christians or Catechumens - 98 Communicants, 47 not qualified for Confession, 14 qualified for Confession alone, the rest were considered Catechumens.”<sup>42</sup>

The *Jesuit Relations* provides the following information about the jubilee at Sillery.<sup>43</sup> “The Christians of St. Joseph, who had not yet heard mention of this devotion [that is, the jubilee and its plenary indulgence], prepared for it with most extraordinary affection. They were told that the preparations for obtaining this pardon were fasting, alms, and prayer or orisons.

“As for fasting, they observed it very easily, for they had not many things to eat at that time; a piece of good fortune nevertheless rendered it more meritorious and more remarkable. A hunter having encountered a caribou, which is not quite so large as one of our oxen in France, pursued it and felled it to the ground. Famine was in their cabins, and the desire to eat fresh meat strongly tempted them; yet never did any Christian consent to taste it on the days which had been appointed to them for fasting - not even the hunter himself. Nay, more - some pagans of his cabin, seeing this example, touched that flesh no more than if it had been poisoned.

“As for alms, they had more difficulty; for they knew not what to give. Gold and silver have no currency among these peoples, and their poverty easily dispensed them from being wasteful. Yet it was necessary, in order to satisfy their devotion, that they should fulfill this clause. Some brought a few Porcelain beads, others a little piece of flesh; there was one who presented a small dish of bark, full of raisins that he had bought from the French. In a word, we gave all their alms to one of the more zealous captains, to distribute them to the most necessitous.

“As for the prayers, they failed not to perform their Stations.<sup>44</sup> And all, besides, [took part] in a somewhat arduous and difficult procession, which they made from Saint Joseph even to Quebec - the distance is about a league and a half. It was held on the day of Saint Stephen, the day after Christmas, in extremely cold weather; they all walked, two by two, in fine order; the children wished to be of the company. The cross and the banner marched before; the Fathers who have charge of that little church led their flock.

“They intoned hymns on issuing from the church; they continued their procession, reciting their rosaries, and offering other prayers. Arriving at Quebec, they delighted the French; their first station was in the church of the Ursuline Mothers; having there prayed to God, and sung some spiritual songs, they moved straight to the parish church, where the blessed sacrament was exposed. They were received [by the French] with motets full of piety, which were sung in honor of him whom they came to adore; when he [that is, Christ] had given them his blessing, by the hands of the priest, they proceeded to the third station, which was at the hospital, where likewise they prayed for the [for the intentions specified by the pope], being continually led and directed by their pastors. Upon departing thence, they returned fasting - two by two, as they had come - concluding the last act of the jubilee in their own church [at Sillery]

The *Jesuit Journal* gives a separate account of the Native people coming to Quebec for the jubilee.<sup>45</sup> “On the 26<sup>th</sup>, [the] day of St. Stephen, the village of Sillery came here in a procession to make its stations in order to gain the jubilee; two of our men [Jesuits] bore the banner and the cross; Fathers de Quen and Dreuilletes came with them, in surplices and [hooded cloaks], and between them the whole troop of Christian [Natives] to the number of more than a hundred. They came fasting, at an extremely cold season, and returned without eating. A feast was given them on their return to Sillery, on the part of Monsieur the Governor. They sang very melodiously everywhere, and said a decade of their rosaries.”

Finally, on December 31, 1645, the *Jesuit Journal* notes: “On the last day of the year, the jubilee was

closed; we thought of making a procession, but the winter season is not at all convenient for that; accordingly, we were content with giving the benediction as usual at the end of vespers. Three cannon shots were fired when the benediction with the blessed sacrament was given, and we went to the religious houses [that is, the Ursulines and Hospital Sisters] to give the benedictions in like manner, and to close the jubilee; there was no salute [that is, no cannon shots].<sup>46</sup>

### **Extraordinary Jubilee on the Election of Alexander VII (1657)**

Alexander VII was elected pope on April 7, 1655.<sup>47</sup> The jubilee for this occasion was not celebrated in Canada until more than two years later, and the *Jesuit Journal* merely relates that on August 15, 1657, “we began to celebrate the jubilee by opening it with a general procession.”<sup>48</sup> In her recent biography of Marguerite Bourgeoys, however, Patricia Simpson explains, “Jesuit Joseph-Antoine Poucet ... proclaimed from the pulpit [of the parish church in Quebec] the Bull of Indulgence granted by Alexander VII on his election to the papacy.”<sup>49</sup>

### **Extraordinary Jubilees for Special Occasions and Needs**

Several other jubilees are noted in the records of early New France. As the sources give no reason for these celebrations, it is presumed that they fall into the category of those for special occasions and needs. Further research in the papal registers, might provide further information.

### **The Extraordinary Jubilee of 1618**

Perhaps the most extraordinary of these extraordinary jubilees was the very first jubilee celebrated in Canada, that of 1618. A fine account is given by Le Clercq.<sup>50</sup>

“The [Huron] Indians ... invite Monsieur de Champlain to go to war with them against the Iroquois, but he did not deem [it] proper to do so. His presence was necessary at Quebec, whither he descended to gain the first jubilee ever published in Canada.

“Father John d’Olbeau had obtained it of His Holiness during his stay in France. It was opened with the usual ceremonies in the chapel of Quebec, July 29, 1618. The French prepared with all possible devotion. Nothing was so edifying as the piety with which they visited the stations which our missionaries had prepared by little chapels, in the form of cabins, in the environs of Quebec. The Indians present, though ignorant of the faith, made exteriorly the same postures and ceremonies as the French, and some of them a little more advanced in instruction recited the prayers, chanting these with us.”

Gabriel Sagard added that it was because Fr. d’Olbeau was like a good shepherd who cared for his sheep that he had obtained this jubilee from the pope while he was in France the previous year. He explains that it was announced in a chapel because they had not yet constructed a proper church. It

appears also that the jubilee processions to the several “stations” were made for only five or six days. He concludes that the observance of the jubilee was “a great satisfaction and consolation to all.”<sup>51</sup>

At this early date there could have been only a handful of people in attendance. In addition to the Hebert family, who had just arrived the year before, there were perhaps four Recollect friars and presumably some traders, soldiers and sailors. According to Trudel, “when Champlain reappeared at Quebec in the summer of 1618, he found that the winter there had been one of great hardship, due to a lack of food and an outbreak of scurvy (though there had been only one fatality). ... Champlain noted with pleasure that the settlement at Quebec was beginning to take on an air of prosperity, with vegetables and other crops growing well. A new milestone was passed in the life of the colony that summer with the marriage of Etienne Jonquest of Normandy and Anne Hebert, daughter of Louis [and Marie]; it was the first marriage performed in new France.” Anne died in childbirth the next year, however, and presumably the child as well.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Extraordinary Jubilee of 1648**

The *Jesuit Journal* reports: “On October 25, the jubilee began; on Sunday we made a procession, after vespers, to the hospital; and on the Day of St. Simon and St. Jude [October 28] the [Native peoples] came here in procession [from Sillery]. On All Saints’ Day [November 1], a procession to the Ursulines; and on the Sunday, which was the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the jubilee, for the close of the same, a general procession - that is to say, to both the religious houses.”<sup>53</sup>

### **The Extraordinary Jubilee of 1653**

The *Jesuit Journal* notes: “On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, the jubilee was announced under the authority of Monseigneur the Archbishop of Rouen, who had sent hither the order to publish it.” Because plenary indulgences are not ordinarily granted by bishops, the writer goes on to explain that the pope grants one “only to the subjects of prelates who requested it from him for their diocesans.” Because the Archbishop of Rouen was considered to have jurisdiction over New France (at least by the Jesuits), the jubilee was published “in the presence...of Monsieur the governor, and of all the assembled people, during high mass.”<sup>54</sup>

### **The Extraordinary Jubilee of 1664**

Finally the *Jesuit Journal* reports: “June. The jubilee began on pentecost. The benediction took place on the day itself at the parish church, and likewise on the following day; on Tuesday, at our church; on Wednesday, at the hospital; on Thursday, at the Ursulines; and so on in turn, until the octave of Corpus Christi.”<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusions

The jubilee holy years of 1625 and 1650, with their focus on Rome, appear to have had little impact on the people living in Quebec. Perhaps “Canadians” who were in France in those years heard more about them, or were actually able to participate. In contrast, the extraordinary jubilees celebrated in Quebec seem to have engaged the participation of almost everyone - even the soldiers who fired the cannons. The two week period of the extraordinary jubilees included a variety of liturgical celebrations and the visiting of several churches or chapels. The records also indicate that the arrangement and scheduling of liturgies varied somewhat from one jubilee to the next. In addition, they made mistakes, were aware that they had done so, and knew what improvements to make the next time.

May memories of the devotion and courage of our ancestors in the faith 350-375 years ago stir our hearts today as we move toward the great jubilee year 2000.

## Notes

1 For the history of jubilees and general information, see: “Jubilee, Holy Year of,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1910) vol. 8, 531-534; also “Jubilee,” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974) vol. 8, col. 1478-1487.

2 Gabriel Sagard, *Histoire du Canada*, 4 vol. (Paris: Claude Sonnius, 1636; reprint Paris: Libraire Tross, 1865), and his *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*, ed. G. M. Wrong, trans. H. H. Longton (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1939).

3 Chrestien Le Clercq, *First Establishment of the Faith in New France*, 2 vol. (New York: John G. Shea, 1881; French original, 1691).

4 These are published, together with other documents, in *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Co. 1896-1901) 73 vol. (Hereafter abbreviated JRAD). French original and English translation are printed on facing pages; quotations and page references are to the English. Punctuation has been modernized. This should be read in conjunction with Joseph P. Donnelly, *Thwaites' Jesuit Relations: Errata and Addenda* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1967).

- 5 General: Marcel Trudel, *The Beginnings of New France 1524-1663*, trans. P. Claxton (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973); Samuel Eliot Morison, *Samuel de Champlain: Father of New France* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1972); *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966) vol. 1.  
Native Peoples: J. H. Kennedy, *Jesuit and Savage in New France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950); Christopher Vecsey, *The Paths of Kateri's Kin* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton AB: University of Alberta Press, 1984, 1997).  
Women: Mary Sifton Pepper, *Maids & Matrons of New France* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1901); Sophy L. Elliott, *The Women Pioneers of North America* (Gardenvale QC: Garden City Press, 1941); Patricia Simpson, *Marguerite Bourgeoys and Montreal, 1640-1665* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
- 6 For the founding of Quebec and its early history, see Kennedy, *Jesuit and Savage*, 20-17; Trudel, *Beginnings*, 93-106, 118-139; Morison, *Champlain*, 102-184. For 1624-1625, see Kennedy, 33; Trudel, 133-139; Morison, 169-184; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 ("Louis Hebert"), 367-368; ("Marie Rollet"), 578; ("Guillemette Hebert"), 366-367; on Marie Hebert see also Pepper, *Maids & Matrons*, 56-79.
- 7 For a chronology of his voyages, see Morison, *Champlain*, 231-233.
- 8 Le Clercq, *First Establishment*, vol. 1, 236-238; Morison, *Champlain*, 186, 233.
- 9 Le Clercq, *First Establishment*, vol. 1, 247; Trudel, *Beginnings*, 135-137.
- 10 Gabriel Sagard, *The Long Journey*, xvi, 269-272; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1, 590-592.
- 11 Pepper, *Maids and Matrons*, 80-86; Elliott, *Women Pioneers*, 23-36; Morison, *Champlain*, 169-184; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 ("Helene Boulee"), 110.
- 12 Le Clercq, *First Establishment*, vol. 1, 235; Kennedy, *Jesuits and Savages*, 33; Trudel, *Beginnings*, 135-136; Morison, *Champlain*, 185-186; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 ("Jean de Brebeuf"), 121-126.
- 13 Le Clercq, *First Establishment*, vol. 1, 235; Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 203-229; more specifically, 217-220; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 ("Pastedechouan"), 533-534.
- 14 Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes Since the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. E. Graf. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; St. Louis: B. Herder, 1938), vol. 18, 4-8.
- 15 Jubilees are variously described as beginning on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day.
- 16 Pastor (vol. 18, p. 6) explains in a footnote, "When the danger of infection from the plague increased, three churches within the city were appointed as jubilee churches ... instead of three without the walls."
- 17 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 19, 5. See also, *Catholic Encyclopedia.*, vol. 8, 533.
- 18 *Jesuit Journal* for 1645, in JRAD vol. 27, 107.

- 19 Pastor, *History of the Popes* ( vol. 30, 180). A note explains that “On October 15, 23 and 25, 1649, respectively, Briefs were sent to the Emperor, to all the Catholic princes, and to the Bishops exhorting them to promote Jubilee pilgrimages to the utmost of their power.”
- 20 *Jesuit Journal* for 1649, in JRAD vol. 34, 59-61.
- 21 *Jesuit Journal* for 1650, in JRAD vol. 35, 51.
- 22 Trudel, *Beginnings*, in general, 210-229; more specifically, 191, 220; Kennedy, *Jesuit and Savage*, 41-43; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 (“Guillemette Hebert [Couillard de Lespinay]”), 366-367.
- 23 Elliott, *Women Pioneers*, 98, 166-167; *Jesuit Journal* for 1650, in JRAD vol. 35, 55; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 (“Jeanne Mance”), 483-487.
- 24 *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol 1 (Charles-Joseph d’Ailleboust des Muceau”), 47; *Jesuit Journal* for 1650, in JRAD vol. 35, 55.
- 25 *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 (“Jean-Paul Godefroy”), 339-340; Trudel, 210-222.
- 26 *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 (“Jean de Lauson”), 427-429; *Jesuit Journal* for 1651, in JRAD vol. 36, 143-145.
- 27 *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 (“Honatteniette”), 370-371; Dickason, 217-221.
- 28 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 30, 180-185.
- 29 Olimpia Maidalchini-Pamfili was the pope’s sister-in-law. According to Pastor (vol. 30, 32-34), her “excessive influence over the aged Pontiff is only too well established.”
- 30 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, 534.
- 31 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 28, 23-24.
- 32 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 30, 23-24.
- 33 *Jesuit Relations* for 1645, in JRAD vol. 29, 89.
- 34 *Jesuit Journal* for 1645, in JRAD vol. 27, 109.
- 35 *Jesuit Journal* for 1645, in JRAD vol. 27, 109-113.
- 36 Many important events began with the singing of the *Veni Creator Sanctus*.
- 37 At that time, exposition and benediction were celebrated frequently, and other liturgies were often celebrated in the presence of the exposed sacrament. See “Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament”, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1909), vol. 2, 465-466; (<http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/02465b.htm>).
- Today this practice is not permitted; see Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, n. 83, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church* (New York: Pueblo Press, 1976).
- 38 The source refers to a “commemoration,” which usually implies a collect. *O sacrum convivium*, however, is an antiphon. Today this text is used in *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, n. 92A (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983).
- 39 A marginal note adds, “It is better not to make a commemoration at vespers, and to conclude by saying the *Tantum ergo sacramentum* for benediction, but adding the collect for the blessed sacrament and the prayer *Deus refugium nostrum et virtus* at the end.”
- 40 Perhaps psalm 117, but also possibly another psalm or hymn of praise.
- 41 Vecsey, *Paths of Kateri’s Kin*, 50-53. See also Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 264; Kennedy, *Jesuit and Savage*, 46, 176.
- 42 *Jesuit Journal* for 1645, in JRAD vol., 27, 121.

- 43 *Jesuit Relations* for 1645, in JRAD vol., 29, 89-92.
- 44 These stations might have been the little church at Sillery plus temporary “cabins” made of brush and animal skins.. The large standing crosses at Sillery might also have been used as stations.
- 45 *Jesuit Journal* for 1645, in JRAD vol. 27, 117.
- 46 *Jesuit Journal* for 1645, in JRAD vol. 27, 117.
- 47 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 31, 9.
- 48 *Jesuit Journal* for 1657, in JRAD vol. 43, 55.
- 49 Simpson, *Marguerite Bourgeoys*, 124.
- 50 Le Clercq, *First Establishment of the Faith*, vol. 1, 129-130.
- 51 Sagard, *Histoire du Canada*, vol. 1, 61-62 (1865 edition); p. 50 (1636 edition).
- 52 Trudel, *Beginnings*, 118-128; quotation, 127; Morison, *Champlain*, 169-174; *Dict. Canad. Biog.*, vol. 1 (“Anne Hebert Jonquet”), 264.
- 53 *Jesuit Journal* for 1648, in JRAD vol. 32, 107.
- 54 *Jesuit Journal* for 1653, in JRAD vol. 38, 185.
- 55 *Jesuit Journal* for 1664, in JRAD vol. 48, 235. Extending the jubilee until the “octave of Corpus Christi” would have made it the unusual length of 19 days. Ending on the “*Sunday within* the octave of Corpus Christ” would have made it the usual 15 days.