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Supressing or exacerbating pain:

Emulation and conversion strategies utilizing images by Jesuit missionaries in New France

From 1625, as a contingent of three religious is arriving in Quebec, Jesuits start to get involved in the missionary impulse deploying in New France. Coinciding with the Catholic Counter-Reformation's period, which objectives are, among other things, the evangelization of indigenous peoples and the propagation of faith in remote lands, these religious missionaries entertain the hope for Catholic conversions and martyrdom. From the orientation of the Jesuit missionary journey in the French colony and contacts with the Natives will result a dichotomous visual representation of pain, aiming either for its exacerbation or suppression. On the one hand, pain figuration is privileged by Jesuits with the Amerindians throughout the 17th century. In fact, image becomes an unavoidable instrument to catch Autochthons' attention. In fact, the "Soldiers of God" opt essentially for the presentation of eschatological themes, illustrating especially purgatory and hell. These subjects, where the bodies burn in the flames, serve certainly as a warning and arousing pain's fear among the Amerindians, the threat of eternal torment corresponding in sum to the rationale highlighted by the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune (1591-1664): "Fear is what precedes Faith in these barbaric spirits." On the other hand, following the death – of which some are particularly brutal – of seven Jesuit missionaries and their lay assistants between 1642 and 1650 during Iroquois raids, flourish several representations of these new martyrs in the thirty years following the brutal events, including a French painting entitled *The Martyrdom of Jesuit Missionaries*, painted around 1665 and preserved in Quebec City. These artworks intended for the novices, the companions of Jesus and the sponsors, emphasize the triumph of the martyrs where, despite the extreme violence, the visible sign of

the victims' suffering disappears in favor of an expression of gentleness and acceptance.

Finally, by this comparative study which, in a sense, reveals the two sides of a same medal, we understand how the representation of pain, overcome or exacerbated, enable the Jesuits to respond much of the indigenous conversion's imperatives, to promote their Order, and to increase, by emulation, the religious' acceptance regarding the possible fatality of their missionary activities.