

NORTH AMERICAN MEN

The Medallion symbolizes three North American Martyrs: Isaac Jogues, Jean LeLand, and Jean Brebeuf, Jesuit priests from France who worked and died among Indian tribes (feathers) in the 1600's in upstate New York and Quebec (maple leaf).

Blessed Junipero Serra (1713–1784), beatified in 1988, founded 21 missions in California and converted thousands of Indians. Despite a bad leg and opposition of the Spanish government, he walked thousands of miles doing his work. He is the patron of priestly vocations. His statue stands in the U.S. Capitol as California's founder.

St. Damien of Molokai (1840–1899) (May 10), one of eight children, joined the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Belgium at age 16 with his brother Auguste. Damien was sent to Hawaii in place of his sick brother and was immediately ordained because of the need for priests. In 1873, he began to live among the lepers quarantined to Molokai. He died of leprosy in 1899. He is the patron of AIDS sufferers and a Hawaiian hero. His statue stands in the U.S. Capitol.

Blessed Pierre Toussaint (1766–1851) was brought to New York from Haiti as a slave. After his owner's death, he remained with the owner's family to care for them. He became a successful hair dresser to the high society ladies of NY and purchased the freedom of other slaves, but not his own. He supported an orphanage and a school for black children in NY. In 1851, he was buried at St. Peter's in NY. In the 1980's, his body was moved to a tomb under the main altar at St. Patrick's Cathedral in NY. He was declared Blessed by John Paul II and is an example of Christ humbling himself for others.

Walter Ciszek, S.J. (1904–1984), was imprisoned for 23 years in Siberia. He entered Russia in 1937 as part of a secret Jesuit missionary program and was released in 1962 in a prisoner (spy) exchange with the USSR following the U-2 incident. His life demonstrates how ordinary holiness can be heroic.

Michael McGivney (1852–1890) was the eldest of thirteen children in a poor Irish immigrant family in Connecticut. He was ordained in 1877 and served as parish priest in New Haven. He was declared venerable in 2008. To provide financial assistance to destitute widows, he founded the Knights of Columbus, which today has more than one million members in 42 countries.

Edward Flannigan (1886–1948) came to the US from Ireland in 1904 and was ordained in 1912. He started Boys Town with a rented house in Omaha for five orphan boys assigned to him by a court. In 1921, he bought a farm, which grew into a town of homeless boys during the great Depression. Today, Boys Town houses more than 54,000 homeless boys and girls in twelve states and DC.

