

Chabanel could not accustom himself to the food of the country, the best prepared being usually a paste made of Indian corn-meal boiled in water. Though so poorly nourished he worked incessantly at the language even while visiting the villages; but there was no seclusion, no privacy, no room or other apartment where he could retire to study; no spot which was not open all day to the gaze of a mob of curious Hurons; he had no light but that furnished by the smoky fireplaces, and while reading his breviary or writing notes he was surrounded by ten or fifteen persons, children of all ages, who screamed, wept and wrangled.

This is a faithful picture of the missionary life led by Chabanel, and although the *Relation* mentions only casually his physical sufferings and inconveniences, we are left to infer that, had God not strengthened this holy man, his courage would have failed him.

**He resolves to
persevere**

Grace from heaven as well as a strong human will was required to give stability to the resolution of a man of culture like Chabanel to live and die amid the conditions we have here described. Heaviest cross of all, God hid His presence now and then from him and left the missionary not merely a prey to all the repugnances of nature but overpowered with desolation of spirit. These are trials too severe for ordinary virtue, and the love of God must be intense in a human heart that can rise above them; supernatural courage must be strong, indeed, not to fail utterly amid such spiritual abandonment. And yet we know that God never withdrew His presence