



Photo: A. Landry

### Virgin and Child With Roses

An old painting by unknown artist  
conserved at the Mission of St.  
Francis Xavier.

# Christmas at the Mission

(1683)

Our Indians' most shining virtues are devotion and charity. They display so much modesty in going to Church and at prayer that those who have known them in their own country, and who see them now, have much difficulty in restraining their tears. Their fervor especially manifests itself upon feastdays. There are some who have abandoned their hunting, and have come more than fifty leagues. (138 mi.) to adore the Infant Jesus, or Jesus dying upon a Cross. They prepare themselves for these festivals by even better confessions, by longer and more fervent prayers before the Blessed Sacrament, which they come to visit several times a day, and by charitable actions.

"Some days before Christmas," says Father Vincent Bigot, "I saw everywhere people carrying loads — some of Indian corn, others of peas or beans, and others of meat and other articles which they were carrying to the poorer Indians. Others went to those with whom they had had disputes in order to prepare themselves by a thorough reconciliation to celebrate the festival in a holier manner. . ."

Thierry Beschefer, Superior of the  
Missions of the Society of Jesus in Canada  
to the Reverend Father Provincial  
of the Province of France.

Quebec, October 21st, 1683.