

Kondiaronk

(1649 ~ 1701)



Kondiaronk was Chief of the Wendat People of New France. He was a brilliant orator and strategist whose leadership saved the Wendat from destruction at the hands of enemy tribes. A contemporary Jesuit historian declared that Kondiaronk was *"the Indian of the highest merit that the French ever knew in Canada."*

During Kondiaronk's childhood, the Wendat were forced to move west from their Ontario home of 1,000 years, fleeing first one enemy, the Iroquois, and then another, the Sioux. It was not until 1671 that Kondiaronk and the Wendat finally found a new place to settle: at Michilimackinac, a strait of land where Lake Huron meets Lake Michigan.

In 1682, Kondiaronk took on the role of negotiating with the French and several other indigenous tribes in an effort to keep the Iroquois and Sioux from waging war against his people. His efforts secured an alliance that staved off annihilation of the Wendat. From 1697 until 1701, Kondiaronk both plotted the destruction of the tribes that threatened his people and conducted negotiations that ultimately led to the *Great Peace of Montréal* between France, the Iroquois, and the other Indian tribes of the Upper Great Lakes.

Kondiaronk died in 1701, several hours after he delivered the speech that led to the Great Peace.

In 1703, Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, baron de Lahontan, published an enormously popular three-volume travelogue of his time in New France; the third volume memorializes a dialogue between himself and an Indian chief he calls "Adario." It is generally believed that "Adario" is based on Kondiaronk. In the dialogue, the Indian chief delineates indigenous concepts of equality and freedom, in sharp contrast to the strictures of European society. This "indigenous critique" of European civilization conveyed by the Baron de Lahontan inspired the intellectuals of his day, and helped to spark the 18th-century Enlightenment.

"Go, my brothers, I release you and send you back to your people, despite the fact we are at war with you."

St. Mary Magdalen is honoring the different communities of our parish throughout 2022.