



WELCOME TO THE SHRINE!

A sacred place of peace and healing; a site of history and holiness

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EVERYONE IS WELCOME



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The History of the Shrine: A Mission of the Conventual Franciscan Friars since 1938

The place where Kateri lived for much of her life, Caughnawaga, near the village of Fonda, New York has been marked since 1938 by the Fonda Memorial of Catherine Tekakwitha. The Indian village site was discovered in 1950, a Holy Year, by Father Thomas Grassmann, a Conventual Franciscan Friar and founder of the shrine. In that year, Father Thomas unearthed the post molds where the stockade around the Indian Settlement at Fonda had been, and between then and 1957, with the help of numerous volunteers excavated the rest of the site. Today it is the only completely excavated Iroquois Indian village in the country.

Visitors to the village, which sits on a hill above the Mohawk-Caughnawaga museum and the shrine chapel, can see clearly the outlines of the twelve longhouses and stockade which existed there 300 years ago.

The museum and chapel are located a quarter mile west of Fonda, housed in a 236-year-old barn renovated in 1938 under Father Thomas Grassmann's direction. The upper floor of the building holds the Chapel of St. Peter's, commemorating the chapel in which Saint Kateri was baptized, and the lower floor museum features an impressive display of Amerindian artifacts from all the Americas, but particularly from the Iroquois country.

The Franciscan Friars took over the shrine grounds in 1938, 12 years prior to the first excavation efforts at the village on the hill. Father Thomas was the first director, and it was he who saw to the shrine's growth until his death in 1970.

Though the Tekakwitha location has a long history, it was not actually a shrine to the Indian maiden until 1980 when Kateri was declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II on June 22. Only then could she officially be venerated. Canonized to Sainthood on October 21, 2012, Saint Kateri is patroness of peace and ecology.

Richard P. Scheiber



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About Our Logo

The logo features the iconic main building that welcomes visitors to the Shrine. This building reflects both the spiritual and cultural mission of the Shrine, as it houses both our Native American Museum and Saint Peter's Chapel, named in honor of Saint Kateri's place of baptism. We choose purple for the logo to acknowledge the Iroquois Confederacy, the people who lived on this site historically, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha's people.

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