



# OUR HEROINE

## THE LIFE OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA

by

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CHAPTER V.  
HER FIRST COMMUNION.  
CHRISTMAS 1677.

The long anticipated privilege of living at the Mission of the Sault became a reality for Kateri in the autumn of 1677. On arriving there, she went to live with an adopted sister and brother-in-law, who took care of her until she died and furnished her with the necessities of life.

Providing for herself is no problem to the modern girl because positions in business and the professions are open to her. Such was not the case in Kateri's time, particularly for an Indian girl; to remain unmarried was practically unheard of. Kateri was not a burden to her sister and brother-in-law as she was a good worker and provided her share of the maintenance. Nevertheless clothing was difficult to obtain and many Iroquois girls who wished to imitate the French Religious were forced to marry in order to obtain clothes. To practice the evangelical counsels in this

manner was more heroic virtue for the Indians than for the French.

Kateri was continually being urged to marry, first by her uncle and other relatives and later at the Sault by her instructress who erroneously believed marriage to be the state in which she would best obtain salvation. Kateri knew otherwise and was firm in her resolve to keep the vow of virginity.

Her instructress was a venerable Christian woman named Anastasia Tagonhatsihongo. She had known Kateri's mother at Ossernenon, and was genuinely interested in the young girl.

Such was Kateri's interest that she learned more in one week than most girls learned in several years. She was never idle for a minute and loved to work side by side with Anastasia as this offered her unlimited opportunities of learning about the lives

and habits of good Christians. Kateri's one thought was to find out what was most pleasing to God. She desired to give all to God without any respect for creatures or any desire of return for herself. Her devotion was not an idle one of self-love, nor was she one of those obstinate devotees, who are in church when they should be at home. In attaching herself to God, she attached herself to work as a proper means of being united with Him as well as in order to preserve during the whole day the good inspirations she had received in the morning at the foot of the altar.

Thus Kateri lived from the autumn she arrived at the Sault until Christmas, and, because she led such a fervent and exemplary life, she merited at this time a grace not granted to those who came from the Iroquois until several years later. She was promised some time before the feast that she might receive Our Lord in Holy Communion for the first time on Christmas Day.

She received the good news with all imaginable joy, and prepared herself for the great event with an increase of devotion. When the great day came

she surrendered herself to Our Lord in Holy Communion and all her fervor was renewed. Only Jesus knew what passed between Himself and his dear little Indian spouse during her First Communion. All we know is that from that day she appeared different to those who worked with her, because she remained so full of God and of love of Him.

Not only was her First Communion an event of great joy and of deep spiritual significance to her and to those about her, but from that day until her death, she received Holy Communion frequently and with the same fervor, and undoubtedly she received the same love and manifold graces from Our Lord, who seeks only to visit us in this Sacrament of Love.

Her sanctity was so remarkable that at the time of general Communion the most devout women wished to be near her in church, claiming that the mere sight of her deep devotion at these times inspired them and served as an excellent preparation for approaching the Holy Table in a fitting manner.



❧ Kateri thanks those who have sent in the names and addresses of their friends and hopes they will have many imitators . . . ❧

❧ A New Year's resolution : help us attain 10,000 subscribers during 1951! ❧