



KATERI set a perfect example of humility for the youth of all ages. Even enough she practiced this virtue in the wilderness of America in the

1600's, before and after her conversion, yet she drew a blueprint for modern youth to follow. She was as happily adjusted to her world and way of life as the young people today are to theirs.

It was just as hard for Kateri to sacrifice a beautiful red dress and to refrain from greasing her hair to a shiny glow in Indian fashion, as it would be for a modern girl to give up wearing shorts in summer, to set formals and party gowns aside in preference to simple dresses, and to avoid beauty parlors.

Kateri wanted to cut off her beautiful braids and wear short hair, but this the missionaries considered too drastic and advised against it. The Indian girl bowed to their wishes in perfect submission, keeping her hair clean but ungreased and taking no pride in it. She wore the oldest clothes she could find which would hide her natural grace. The only time Kateri

Kateri and

Part III

She set a perfect

example of humility. She was ever dressed carefully when she was going to Holy Communion. For those occasions she kept a simple blue gown, preferring Mary's color to the bright Indian red of her companions.

Kateri's humility takes on a brighter hue when we realize that she was actually a princess. Her father was chief of the tribe until his death and after that he was succeeded by his brother, Kateri's uncle, with whom she made her home. This placed Kateri in an enviable position giving her similar rank in her world as the daughter of the mayor in a fair-sized American city of today. Therefore it was much harder for Kateri to renounce the pleasures and luxuries of her world than had she been a mere nobody in tribal life.

Because of her position it was very hard for Kateri to practice her religion in her native village. It was easier in the winter however during the hunting season. With the men away all day in search of deer and beaver Kateri lived the life of a Religious. She hid in the woods to pray.

Modern Youth

by Anne Tansey

example of humility

She made a little shrine near a running stream, fashioning a cross out of the branches of a tree.

At the same time Kateri did not neglect her share of the work. She did all she was told to do by the older women, chopping wood, cooking soup, making collars from deerskin, taking care of the younger children, refusing no task no matter how menial it might be.

While Kateri often dreamed of the Mission of St. Francis by the banks of the St. Lawrence, she was afraid to try escaping from her own village. She not only feared her uncle but was afraid she might be guilty of filial disobedience. When Father James Lamberville assured her that it was a part of God's plan for her to flee to the Christian Indian Village, Kateri risked her uncle's displeasure and made plans to leave the village unnoticed. In this as in all other things she laid aside her own ideas and obeying the will of her superior set forth upon the long and dangerous voyage to the banks of the St. Lawrence.

Even though all inhabitants of the village were Christians, Kateri's life stood out like a lighted torch among them. Not many of them tried to live as perfect a life as Kateri led. They marvelled at her and no one ever whispered one word against her, which was most unusual in any Indian village. They spoke of her as gentle, affectionate, even gay of spirit, very patient and always ready to lend a helping hand.

The entire village was plunged into sorrow when Kateri took sick. For the last two months of her life the Indian girl suffered torments but no word of complaint ever crossed her lips. Speaking of her humility her spiritual director relates, "She considered herself the greatest sinner in the village and had such an humble opinion of herself that she could not bear anyone to say the least word in her praise, but immediately fled, or, if she was unable to retire, she would hide in her blanket in order to conceal her blushing face. It even pained her when I spoke to her of the glory that awaited her in heaven, for she was unable to imagine how a wicked creature, such as she conceived herself to be, had any right to think of this heritage of the just and the Saints. On the contrary she admired all others, praising and approving where it was deserved and excusing the rest with great charity."