

Kateri's Bishop

This March, His Holiness Pope John XXIII approved the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites declaring heroic the virtues of the Servant of God, Venerable François de Laval, first Bishop of Quebec—Kateri's Bishop.

During the autumn of 1959, on the occasion of the tercentenary of François de Laval's arrival in Canada and the official establishment of the Church in this vast country, His Eminence Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani presided at the civic and religious ceremonies. The Churches of Belgium, England, France, Haiti, Nationalist China, and the United States were represented by high ranking prelates. The pioneer Bishop's virtues were extolled on all sides. The Kateri Bulletin is happy to point out that as Bishop of New France, François de Laval was also the Ordinary of much of what is now New England and of the Mississippi Valley.

After signing the decree, Pope John XXIII stressed Bishop de Laval's constant protection of the Indians against adverse political and business interests. The prelate tenderly loved his tawny flock.

In 1675, three years before Kateri's arrival, he visited the Mission of St. Francis Xavier. The Bishop had already met many of the Caughnawagas. Six or seven years before, in Quebec, he had baptized Catherine Gandeaktewa, wife of the first Indian of the Mission, and ten others who accompanied them.

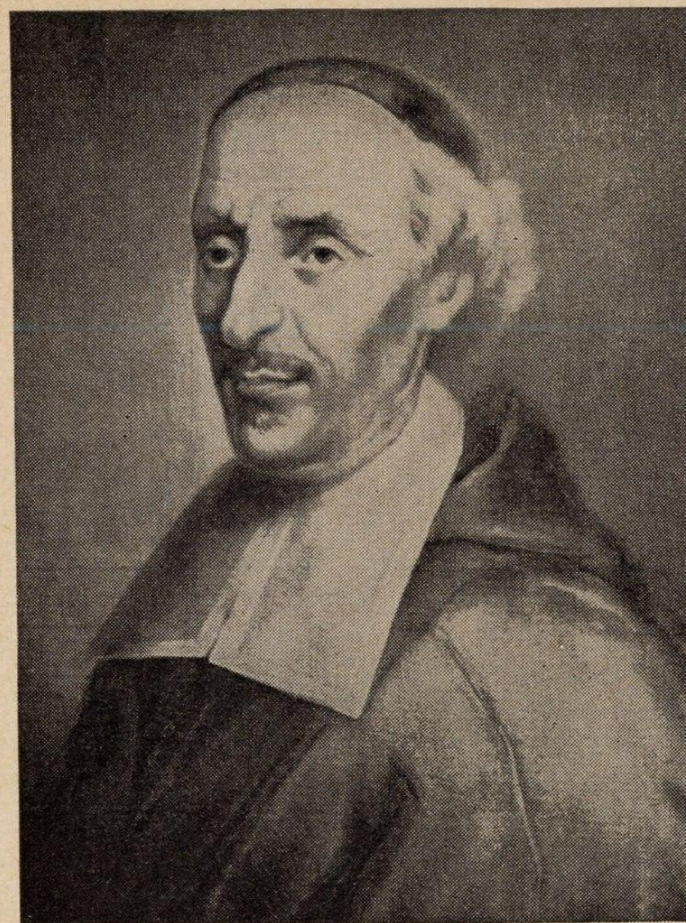


Photo Géka.

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Venerable François de Laval

(1623-1708)