



"Marry me, and we'll call our first daughter Kateri!"

His project eventually succeeded, but he had then gone to his reward. Toward the end of 1667, to the south of the St. Lawrence River, facing the pioneer town of Montreal, the Jesuits founded the Mission of St. Francis Xavier. This would have been impossible without Jérôme Le Royer's establishment. Ten years later, at the second site of the Christian Indian village, an Indian girl, of Mohawk Algonquian descent, baptized the previous year, came to live with the community of "praying Indians". She was the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.

A few months after her arrival, on Christmas Day 1677, Kateri made her first Holy Communion. Her first reception of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament raised to a white heat the inner fire of love consuming her. A love that grew until her saintly death on April 17, 1680.

Her spiritual director, Father Cholenec, in a little known letter of 1718, writes that it was at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier that Kateri achieved sanctity. The few times she visited Montreal,

she was impressed by Jérôme Le Royer's Hospital Sisters. After seeing them, it dawned upon her, that she, too, could consecrate herself to God. On the feast of the Annunciation, 1679, Kateri Tekakwitha, with her director's permission, took the private vow of perpetual virginity. "It was", he wrote, "her greatest glory before God, and considering her from that aspect alone, it is not surprising that she deserved so many graces during her lifetime, and to bring about such great miracles after her death."

At the very outset of their work in New France, the Jesuits found in Sachem Membertou a soul ready for Christianity. They nurtured it and brought it to full bloom. Sixty-five years after, at Gandaouagué, and later at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier, they directed young Kateri Tekakwitha to the heroic heights of sanctity. She was not the only one. Records have been kept of more than forty Indians who were granted extraordinary mystical graces. Tekakwitha was not a mystic in the ordinary sense of the word, and by the same token she is much closer to most of us.

Mysterious bonds between Montreal and the first missionaries of New France! Ties stronger than hooks of steel between the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha and Montreal! As we recall the three hundred and fifty years of Jesuit missionary endeavor among the Indians of New France, this mention of Tekakwitha is not out of place. She was the greatest of them all.

To avoid complications
Please make out all your checks to :

KATERI

and address your letters to :

KATERI

Caughnawaga, P. Q.

Canada