

## One of Kateri's Own

Over a quarter of a century ago, Miss Jeanne Bouvier of Brookline, Mass., at her own expense, prepared a film on the Lily of the Mohawks. Father John J. Wynne, S. J., the first vice-postulator for the beatification and canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha, advised her in this venture. At Caughnawaga, where most of the film was shot, she met many of Kateri's people. She discovered an ideal "Kateri" in Miss Evelyn Montour.

For several weeks the little cast worked hard. Evelyn did a fine job as the Mohawk maiden of long ago. Later on, Miss Guilberte Bouvier utilized her sister's film to illustrate her biography of the Lily of the Mohawks, one of the last books Pope Pius XI read before his death.

In 1953, photos of girls from Caughnawaga and from St. Regis were sent to Sculptor Emile Brunet in Paris. A statue of Kateri was to be erected in her mission. Mrs Evelyn Montour Cook was the one that inspired him most. So much so that her friends recognize her quite clearly in the bronze monument.

After acting the rôle of Kateri, Evelyn Montour, even lived the life of Kateri in her vocation as wife and mother. In 1944, she married air force Capt. William Cook, an Indian from the American section of international St. Regis Mission, close to Massena, N. Y. God blessed the young couple with four children.

Joyfully and courageously she accepted the joys and sorrows of life. The Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha was known for her smile. "I can't think of Evelyn", one of our Caughnawaga women said, "without remembering her smile."

Kateri was noted for her charity to others; so was this young Indian widow of our times. Her thoughtfulness and kindness are well appreciated. No one was surprised that, at her funeral, the Mission Church of St. Regis was packed.



Kateri Tekakwitha loved Our Lady. So did Evelyn Cook. And she did all she could to make others love the Blessed Virgin as she did. In particular, she was instrumental in launching and maintaining the Holy Rosary Society in her parish.

Much like Kateri, even as a child, Evelyn was often ill. First, from rheumatic fever and then from heart trouble, doubtless an after-effect which was to follow her to the end. A heavy cross was the death of her husband in a plane crash in 1952. She became both mother and father to her children. Letters to her daughters, the day before she underwent complicated heart surgery, from which she never recovered, show her great tenderness and Christian fortitude.

As the widow of an American serviceman she had the right to government hospitalization. She was told her condition was critical and that her operation could only be performed in a hospital in Texas. So, after a fond farewell to her children, she left for the distant State. Mr. John Glenn was being treated at the hospital when she arrived, but she did not see him. For several weeks, her doctor tried to build her up for the operation. During the last days, her two sons were beside her. When she came to, after the surgery, she was unable to speak, but managed to smile at them. She died on April 9, 1964, at the age of forty-two.

On Tuesday morning, April 14, at St. Regis, Quebec, the solemn requiem mass for the repose of her soul was offered by the Iroquois Jesuit and Pastor, Father Michael K. Jacobs. Nine priests, both diocesan and religious, attended the service as well as a Brother of the Christian Schools. The Caughnawaga Indian Choir, of which, years before, she had been a member, sang the mass in the vernacular, in Iroquois, Kateri's language. The distaff side of the Veterans of Foreign Wars from Caughnawaga were also present.

Thus lived and died one of Kateri's own. Had Evelyn lived in 1680, she would have surely been one of the Lily of the Mohawk's close friends!

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss J. M. J.!**

Please accept the enclosed offering (\$5.) from the Ottawa Legionaries (of Mary) to help advance the cause of Kateri Tekakwitha. We enjoyed our visit to Caughnawaga and the shrine, last month, very much, and were glad to learn about the wonderful Iroquois "saint". Moreover, it will be a very long time before we will forget the inspiring singing of the Iroquois Choir. Thank you very much for the opportunity—we will be sure to pray for Kateri Tekakwitha's beatification . . . (Ottawa, Ont.)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Rt. Rev. Msgr. J. P. M.!**

My greetings from Denver. Sorry I could not make Montreal and Kateri last summer. I hope your health will improve . . . Enclosed find my mite towards the help you need. God bless you in your work. With kindest personal wishes . . . (Denver, Colo.)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. T. G.!**

Enclosed is a check for \$25. for Kateri's cause. I am sending it in memory of my parents . . . Please pray for their souls. We have eight children—all praying for Kateri's beatification. Our own little Kateri is now three years old. She was born on April 8 and baptized on April 17 . . . (Johnstown, Pa.)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss M. R. V.!**

Enclosed is a check for \$100. for perpetual membership in the Kateri Guild with its corresponding spiritual advantages. I felt if I got a promotion at work, I would join the Kateri Guild for the advantages plus the helping of the cause of the Lily of the Mohawks. I hope Kateri will be canonized and that she will continue to intercede for me . . . (Niagara Falls, N. Y.)