

# CANADA'S MOST FAMOUS DAUGHTER KATERI TEKAKWITHA

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Photo Landry

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She amazed her contemporaries. They talked and wrote much about her. She was and still is Canada's most famous daughter.

Born in 1656 in the Iroquois village where Isaac Jogues was martyred, she died a few kilometers from the actual site of Expo 67 on the banks of the St. Lawrence, at the village of Caughnawaga still inhabited by a group of Indians.

Kateri Tekakwitha passed her life in the setting of Caughnawaga. Apparently there was nothing extraordinary to it; she continued to wear her hair in two braids after the fashion of the young Iroquois girls. She was sensible. She was joyful. People came to consult her about decisions to be taken. She was at the same time imperious and tender, humble and domineering, zealous and patient, sorrowful and happy, bellicose and peaceful, inexorable and infinitely indulgent. The mark of holiness was upon her.

● The following statement dates back to 1696: "All the French of this New World have a particular veneration for our Catherine."

● Father Cholenec declared unhesitatingly: "... I find more than thirty persons whom she helped back onto the right road and ob-

tained for them the gift of chastity. It's especially in this matter that she performs miracles in souls..."

● It was said of her that she was "of a very cheerful disposition." From all sides, people turned to this bearer of joy to ask her assistance in motivating their existences.

● Kateri was never afraid of danger. She never hesitated to displease her own whenever she thought they interfered with her acceptance of the Will of God. Is it necessary to recall her steadfastness in brushing aside all marriage proposals?

"The thought occurred to her that she might not live very long. She then resolved to make up for her sins here below. At the beginning of 1678, Kateri made use of the winter cold as a means of mortification. The little church of St. Francis Xavier was not heated. Kateri Tekakwitha often spent hour upon hour there. Father Cholenec had her come into the house of the

Black Robes where she could warm herself. "But a moment after," he wrote, "she would break free, after telling me with a little smile that she was not cold, to return to where she had left her heart."

In 1744, concerning her, Father de Charlevoix wrote: "New France had its apostles and its martyrs and gave to the Church saints in every state of life, but chose none, after her death, other than the young convert practically unknown to the entire country during her lifetime. She is the one who, for more than sixty years, has universally been regarded as the protectress of Canada."

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In Montreal a small Center works at promoting the cult and beatification of Kateri. Father Béchard, its promoter, believes that this young Iroquois will be beatified in the near future.

The Indians of Canada are about 250,000 while the Eskimos do not come to more than 20,000.

## ❖ Kateri's smile upon you, Mr. I. H. I

On a tour to Expo 67, during the week of June 19 to 27, we were treated to a special trip from Montreal to the Indian Reservation at Caughnawaga. While there we visited the church and were taken around and shown different fascinating points of interest. One important souvenir was the remains of Kateri Tekakwitha which interested me very much because I am a devoted visitor to Auriesville, N.Y., and am always interested in the history of Kateri Tekakwitha. I now fully understand it (I believe) and always have prayed for her beatification. I wish to subscribe to the quarterly "Kateri". Enclosed find one dollar for a one year enrollment. If you send an acknowledgement of this letter, please insert some leaflets entitled "Kateri and You!" I would like to distribute them to friends (about twelve)...

(Union City, N.J.)