

**May the Joy
that Christ alone can give
be yours on Christmas Day
and on every day of 1970!**



Christmas at Kateri's Mission

(1682)

The Indians' most shining virtues are devotion and charity. They display so much modesty in going to Church and at prayer that those who have known them in their own country, and who see them now, have much difficulty in restraining their tears. Their fervor especially manifests itself upon feast-days. There are some who have abandoned their hunting, and have come more than fifty leagues (one hundred and thirty-eight miles) to adore the Infant or Jesus dying upon a Cross. They prepare themselves for these festivals by more scrupulous confessions, by longer and more fervent prayers before the Blessed Sacrament, which they have come to visit several times a day, and by charitable actions.

"Some days before Christmas," says Father Vincent Bigot, "I saw everywhere people carrying loads — some of Indian corn, others of peas, or beans, and others of meat and other articles which they were carrying to the poorer people. Others went to those with whom they had had disputes in order to prepare themselves by a thorough reconciliation to celebrate the festival in a holier manner. They seem to possess nothing for themselves when it is a question of succoring the poor and the sick. They go to get wood for them, which they are obliged to carry upon their backs for a considerable distance. They provide them with corn, with meat, and with everything they think they need — although, in reality, they give them in most cases only what is necessary for themselves. Many would even scruple to refuse the slightest thing that might be asked of them, although they might not have enough food for two days. They do not lack opportunities for practicing such charity on account of the great number of Iroquois who come from their country — some to visit them, others to dwell with them. The newcomers are so touched by this that many of them have needed no other inducement to become Christians; while those who return to their own country are filled with high sentiments of regard for the faith."

Letter of Father Thierry Beschefer, Superior of the missions of the Society of Jesus in Canada, Written to the Reverend Father Provincial of the Province of France.