

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. M. A. !**

For the past twenty-five years, I have been praying to my dear friend Kateri Tekakwitha, and looking back, I cannot think of one prayer that was not answered one way or another. I have seven children and sometimes worried myself sick over them. Then I decided to put everything in the hands of God and of my friend Kateri. Somehow everything always seemed to turn out all right. Last year, one son seemed to drift away in another Province and had no work, while a younger one at home seemed to be keeping bad company (though he gave me no problems). I dreaded the coming summer because he had mentioned traveling without funds. So once again, I turned to Kateri. The older boy is now home and working. The other has decided to take a special two-year course beginning in September so he is now going to summer school to complete one grade 12 subject, and working five evenings a week to help pay for his course. All this he did on his own without any nagging, and without a doubt through the help of my very dear friend Kateri.

I recently came across an old Kateri copy and found a prayer pledge and I am sending it gladly. I am also enclosing a ten-dollar check for the cause of Kateri. Would you kindly send me seven medals and one touch relic?

We are taking three of our children for two weeks to visit a relative in wild mountainous country. Frankly, I'm not too brave about going in bush country in a small plane, but I know that Kateri will watch over us all. Thank you for making Kateri known to me. I think of her as a dear personal friend. (St. Boniface, Man.)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss E. C. !**

I am forwarding the enclosed check to cover the cost of the Kateri Sympathy Cards. Please use the remainder of the money for Kateri's Cause. My life has changed since I first learned of little Kateri. I hope others will learn of her. (Brooklyn, N. Y.)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. R. S. !**

This is an offering of fifty dollars to Kateri for her Cause in thanksgiving for having cured me promptly from a severe illness. I promised to publish this cure. . . (Boucherville, Quebec)

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

I am forwarding you this check which I promised if I sold my cottage. I am faithful to Kateri. (Montreal, P. Q.)

*(When acknowledging favors to Kateri, be sure to indicate details.)*

## Many Iroquois lived among the Quebec Hurons

### INDIAN CHRISTMAS 1671

**T**HE REVEREND MOTHER MARIE DE L'INCARNATION... presented at the beginning of Advent to Louis Taondechoren, chief Dogique [ catechist ] of the little Huron Church, close by Quebec, a very beautiful waxen image of the holy Infant Jesus in his cradle. This good Indian manifested more gratitude for the gift than if he had been presented with all the treasures of the world.

The entire village shared his joy, and regarded this holy image, although given to an individual, as a common possession and a present sent from Heaven.

Their Pastor — who seeks only new opportunities for inflaming that zeal of theirs for everything connected with God's service — formed the plan, with Louis' consent, to afford consolation to all with this treasure; and to take such action that each of the cabins might enjoy it in turn.

Being well instructed, they beheld in this image Him whom it represented; and well knew that the honors which they rendered it would not stop at the figure before their eyes, but would pass on even to the sacred person of

the Savior of the world, who graciously condescended to become a child for love of us. They conceived the idea of making the honors bestowed upon this holy image an atonement for the ill reception that His compatriots gave the Infant Jesus when He came into the world.

The Father, seeing them filled with such pious feelings, assured them that this act of devotion would secure them a thousand blessings from Heaven. He gave them a whole week to prepare to receive the image in their cabins. That week was spent in a renewal of fervor that was highly acceptable to Heaven and Earth. A missionary is happy when he finds means to reach the heart; and anything that can serve to advance his Church in the spirit of the faith and in the practice of the solid virtues, seems to him of importance. He wrote on separate slips the names of the heads of all the cabins; and when the day for this act of devotion came, after singing the **Veni Creator**, the first slip that came to hand was the one inscribed with the name of a good widow, who had displayed especial zeal in the preparation that she had made for rendering herself worthy of



"A very beautiful waxen image of the Infant!" This statuette is nearly two hundred years old.

being the first hostess of the little Jesus. She had thought only of what might please Him, — often rising before dawn to go and offer Him her prayers in the chapel; and to recite her Rosary there for the purpose of inclining his holy Mother's heart in her favor. At this news she thought that she would die with joy.

Speedily all was made ready, her cabin thoroughly cleaned, and a very neat little altar prepared, with its dais and adorned with all the beautiful things that she could find for the reception of such a guest. For she was convinced that this choice was a stroke of Heaven, and the sign of a special Providence of Our Lord toward her and all her family. The holy image having been borne to her cabin in a sort of procession, and placed on the altar, the Father had the company offer a prayer in greeting to their guest and present to Him all that they possessed, — their goods, their persons, and their lives. At the close, they all began to sing Christmas carols in their language in honor of the Holy

Infant Jesus, continuing this practice at their little evening Benedictions on each of the following days.

The ceremony was followed by a feast which this good woman gave to the chief people of the village, but before placing the food before them, she thus addressed the whole company:

"The little Jesus is entertaining you; and you must know that, although everything is His, independently of me, nevertheless I of my own free will make him a special gift of all that belongs to me, — my corn and other grain, and my little furnishings; and I pray Him also to take possession of my person and of my children, to make such use of them as he shall choose during this life and throughout eternity. It was to make this solemn declaration in your presence that I prepared this little feast in His name."

That act of devotion was approved by all the company and the Father, who was present, caused them after the benediction, to offer a prayer to the holy

Infant Jesus, supplicating his acceptance of this good widow's offering. She wished further that two of her children should also share in this offering. To this end, she sent for her little son Joseph, thirteen years old, our pupil in the sixth class, and godson of Monseigneur our Bishop, who is having him reared in his house. Upon his arrival, she first made him pay divine honors to Our Lord in his image; and then asked him, at the same time showing him some porcelain [wampum] collars, — wherein the entire wealth of the family consists, — whether he were not well pleased to give the little Jesus half of his share. "Yes, indeed," said he. Putting the same question to a daughter of hers, she received a like reply. Thereupon she said: "You gratify me, my children. So the little Jesus will be pleased to accept half of our most precious possessions, and will sanction our using the rest in making our little necessary purchases."

On the following day, she begged the Father to come to her cabin where, in her children's presence, she besought him to accept a fine collar of 4,000 porcelain [wampum] beads for the Infant Jesus. This was given in order to strengthen the friendship which the latter had deigned to show them by choosing their cabin for his first abode in the village; and to implore Him to regard them always as persons who, while wholly His from the necessity of their being, and the constant help of His grace, had, by a voluntary resolve of their own free will, pledged themselves to serve Him the rest of their lives more faithfully than ever. They also besought Him not to forsake them; and, although he made his abode in other cabins, to extend to them always a special providence. The Father accepted the collar at the time in order not to deprive her of the merit of her generosity and gratitude; but because of her poverty, he made her take it back

two weeks later, assuring her that Our Lord would be well pleased thereby as if it were used in adorning His altar.

While this image of the holy Infant Jesus was passing from cabin to cabin each week, in the manner realated, until the Festival of the Purification, each person, with a holy jealousy, took pleasure in preparing for it an altar more magnificent than the last, inventing new devices to guard it from smoke.

This devotion wrought incredible blessings everywhere. So great was the modesty and self-control of the occupants of the cabin enjoying that happiness, that for the time being they conducted themselves almost as if they had been in church. Benedictions were held there regularly every evening, even in the Father's absence, — the little ones as well as the adults attending without fail, while after the usual prayers, which they all recited aloud at the usual hour, they sang responsively — the men and the little boys in one chorus, and the women and the girls in another — songs and hymns in their own tongue on the mystery of the birth of the Son of God. Their manner of singing was so pleasing and so devout that the French living in the neighborhood, and even some in settlements at a considerable distance, heard them with admiration, and were touched.

The more enlightened among the Indians noticed so great a change in the families who had received in their midst the image of the holy Infant Jesus, that, whenever they saw any disorderly conduct in a family, they immediately wished, and, as far as they could, brought it about that the holy image should be carried to that house. This course was adopted by their Captain. Seeing one day that all the remonstrances offered to a young woman to lead her to a reconciliation with her husband were of no avail, he