

As "Protectress of Canada"
the sanctity of married life
concerns Kateri. . .

Echoes of "Humanae Vitae"

*"Rome has spoken". Now let us hear
The worldly wise who laugh and sneer
In cynicism crude, uncouth—
Like Pilate asking "What is truth?"
For steeped in proud subjectivism,
Their guide the rule of pragmatism,
These syncophants, this elite set
Oft sound their bromide epithet
"Medieval". Yet how absurd
The necromancy of this word.
While louder shouts the rebel band
To hide the weakness of their stand.
Affecting liberals to despise
Staid sages stoop to compromise;
And so-called Christian sanhedrin
Says "Nihil Obstat" to foul sin.
The New York Times approves. What more?
And wide will spread this festering sore
Through licensed bonds companionate
And plighted troth to decimate.
In contraceptive science taught
Lust counts her former fear as naught.
In checking life against God's will
The atom bomb yields to the pill.
And cringing conscience sets a norm
The law of nature to deform.
"Rome has spoken." In alliance
World, Satan, Flesh shriek their defiance
And all unite to nullify
God's plan "Increase and multiply."*

Richard M. McKeon, S.J.
Le Moyne College
Syracuse, N.Y.

Kateri Tekakwitha

A twentieth century write-up on the Lily of the Hohawks

ON WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK, April 17, 1680, at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier in the Fields, died a young Amerind aged less than twenty-four years. To one of her companions, she said before her death: "I shall love you in Heaven, I shall help you." Shall not the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, whose cause of Beatification is well advanced — only one first-class miracle is still needed — turn to us with these same words, if we do our utmost to further her Beatification and later on her Canonization?

A Wall of Silence

But, in 1972, are the Blessed and the Saints whom the Church has elevated to the glory of the altars of interest to many Catholics? On the pretence of honoring Christ, do they not cut themselves off with a wall of silence from these men and women who, during their lifetime, succeeded in transforming themselves into Him?

Cardinal Suenens, whom nobody will consider as an ultra-conservative, declared some two or three years ago:

"The Saints overflow into all time because they live of God and in God; as much as the divine action itself, they escape our narrow limits. Their history continues in the history of the Church itself as the Gulfstream penetrates into the sea. They are present among us, whether we know it or not."

To this effect, the last Council of Vatican II, inspired like all the Ecumenical Councils by the Holy Spirit, has clearly affirmed the necessity of deep-hearted devotion for the heroes of the Faith. It has even maintained the decrees of the Council of Constantinople IV (869-870), pronouncing anathema against anyone who does not acknowledge the cult of saints: "The Holy Council definitely teaches this Catholic doctrine and, at the same time, urges all the sons of the Church to generously promote. . . and to exactly maintain what, in the past, has been decided relatively to the cult of the saints, the images of Christ, and of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints."

In this connection, Cardinal Cushing wrote: "It would be good if more people read the decrees of the Council, and studied them, rather than allow themselves to be led astray by those who assume the right to interpret these decrees independently of the teaching authority of the Church."

Conscious of the importance of the "Decree on the Church" touching the cult of the Blessed and of the Saints, Paul VI established on April 28, 1969, a new Congregation, that of the Causes of the Saints, and gave it a Cardinal-Prefect, an Undersecretary, and a group of researchers and experts. One can see in this innovation, an invitation not to allow oneself to be deceived by the lure of an anaemic Christianity, a Christianity that refuses to recognize the Mystical Body of Christ. For us, here in Canada and the United States, I see more specifically an invitation to renew contact with those who sanctified our history and especially with the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, whose cause is pending in Rome. Within this sphere, we shall have to follow the example of our fathers in the Faith, a responsibility which obviously will demand more backbone than ever before.

Formerly

Shortly after the death of Kateri Tekakwitha in the seventeenth century, Intendant de Champigny and his wife had pictures of the Servant of God struck off and distributed so as to make her known at the French Court and among the Canadian settlers. On September 26, 1715, Father Pierre Cholenec, S.J., wrote a long Latin letter to the Very Reverend Father Michael-Angelo Tamburini, General of the Society of Jesus. In this document, he methodically set forth the virtues of the Lily of the Mohawks as if he had been the Postulator of her Cause of Canonization. In 1744, Father François-Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J., in his monumental **History and Description of New France**, notified his readers that this young Iroquois woman was then "universally considered as the protectress of Canada," and as "the new star of the New World." The conquest of New France by England slowed down the movement in favor of the Iroquois maiden's canonization.

In the last century, the Second and Third Councils of Baltimore, U.S.A., solicited along with the canonization of the Jesuit Martyrs that of Kateri Tekakwitha. On June 19 and 30, 1885, Their Lordships Bishops Antoine and Dominique Racine, both born at Lorette, P.Q., begged, Leo XIII to glorify the Martyrs and Kateri Tekakwitha. That same year, from the Holy Father twenty-eight Amerindian tribes requested the same favor for this child of the great forest.



N. Esther Higgins pinxit.

THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS

Not so long ago

It belonged to our twentieth century to continue the campaign in favor of Kateri Tekakwitha's canonization, and it did so with vigor and spirit. Between 1932-1935, the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of Canada and of the United States petitioned the Holy See for the beatification and the canonization of the young Mohawk. On April 10, 1934, in the name of the Province of Quebec, the Honorable Alexander Taschereau wrote to Pius XI: "May I be allowed in my quality of Premier to join my humble and earnest request to those which Your Holiness receives in favor of the beatification of the Iroquois maiden, Catherine Tekakwitha. . . Heirs of those who brought to Canada the benefits of Christianity and of civilization, we would be happy to see the Church elevate to the glory of the altars this humble and pure representative of the proud Indian tribes that first inhabited our country. . ."

In 1939, the diocese of Saint-Jean-de-Quebec, it is worthy to note, supplied 28,649 signatures from the faithful who implored His Holiness "to grant us the glorification of the pious Servant of the Lord, Kateri Tekakwitha."

Once again the Amerinds, much more numerous than in 1885, insisted that their compatriot be beatified: among them were the Coeurs d'Alène, the Navajos, Yumas, Dakotas, Mohawks, Malicites, Micmacs, Algonkins, and many others.

In 1941, all these efforts culminated in the official proclamation of the heroicity of the virtues of Kateri Tekakwitha, thus earning her the title of Venerable.

After this important step ahead, followed a period of quiet. Vatican II lightened up the whole sky, and its backlash unfortunately weakened the faith of many. Father Gervais Dumeige, S.J., the well-known medievalist, was able to verify that, whenever in the history of the Church, there was a lessening of faith, similarly the wide-spread cult of saints has been weakened and even at times has completely disappeared.

On the other hand, the last Council offers many reasons to hope that shortly the cult of the Blessed and of the Saints, and particularly of the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, will flourish. Indeed the conciliar decrees paid attention to the laity, to the peoples of color, to the Third World and to the illiterate. Kateri Tekakwitha represents all these people, as Bishop Gérard-Marie Coderre (in whose diocese Kateri's remains now rest), wrote in the preface of an Italian biography of the Venerable: "This little Indian will soon reveal herself, we believe, as the saint millions of members of the laity prefer.

She will be particularly beloved by the colored nations of Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Holiness is not a prerogative of the educated: this lesson is greatly needed at a time when three-quarters of humanity suffers from illiteracy."

Nowadays

These forecasts are already becoming a fact. Whereas our "intellectuals", lay, clerical, and religious, pull a long face at the sight of a biography of Kateri whether it be well written or not, a book on Kateri was recently and successfully published in Bengali; **Das Mädchen der Mohawks**, which came off the press two years ago in Austria, has received much acclaim; **Miracle of the Mohawks** by a Protestant writer attracted attention in the United States, and, quite recently, in Samoa, a well documented article made her known in the volcanic islands of the Oceanian archipelago. Finally the **Kateri** quarterly, appearing in French and English, has approximately 10,000 subscribers, and draws about one hundred letters a week to the Vice-Postulator's office at the Mission of St. Francis Xavier in Caughnawaga, P.Q.

Tomorrow

My present responsibility consists in trying to find 100,000 or more friends of Kateri, who will pledge themselves in writing to offer daily an Our Father or a Hail Mary in order to escalate her Beatification. "I believe," wrote St. Dominic of the Mother of God, "that one must accept as a maxim that, if God inspires many to incessantly ask for one and a single favor, it is evident proof that He wishes to grant it." As tenacious as the thousands of Kateri's clients, who for nearly three centuries, have been working for her Beatification, would the readers of this article not send in their written promise of a daily prayer to obtain the Beatification of the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha? Miracles cannot be bought; they are obtained through dialogue with God and by penance. It's a very old recipe. There is no other. . .

Last month an elderly Huron wrote me a letter which singularly touched me. She complained that the whites had so neglected the Indians that they were doing very little about beatifying Kateri. In the three Americas live some 30,000,000 Amerinds. This race has not, to my knowledge, a single pure-blood canonized saint, although many candidates are worthy of the altars. If you help to have Kateri beatified, surely Kateri will love you, she will pray for you, and help you in return.

H. B.