

Three centuries ago...

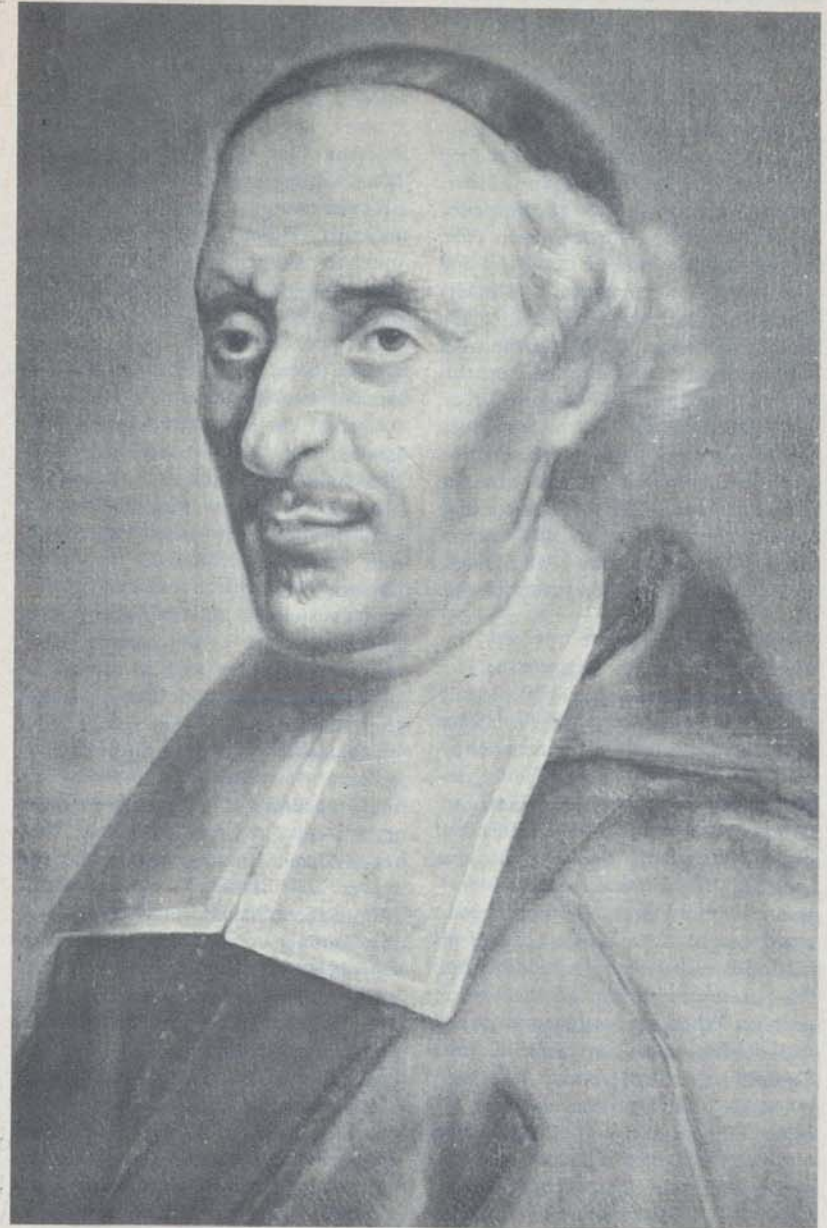
## KATERI'S BISHOP AT THE MISSION MAY 1675

VISIT PAID BY MONSEIGNEUR THE BISHOP OF QUEBEC, AND MONSIEUR THE INTENDANT, TO THE INDIANS OF LA PRAIRIE DE LA MAGDELEINE, WHERE THE MISSION OF SAINT FRANÇOIS XAVIER IS ESTABLISHED.

ON the twentieth day of May, while Reverend Father Claude Dablon, superior of the Missions of the Society of Jesus in New France, was here on his visit, we learned that Monseigneur de Laval, the first bishop of Quebec, was only three leagues from Montreal, which he was to enter on the following day. Upon receiving this news, the Father superior took Father Choleneq with him, to go to pay his respects to His Lordship. They found that apostolic prelate with the train and equipage of a prince of the primitive Church. This man, who is great by his birth, and still more by his virtues,—which have recently made him the admiration of France, and which on his last voyage to Europe justly won for him the king's esteem and approval,—this great man, I say, while visiting his diocese was conveyed in a small bark canoe by two peasants, with no other suite than a single ecclesiastic. He had with him merely a wooden crozier, a very simple miter, and only such other ornaments as were absolutely necessary for a *golden bishop*,

as the authors say when speaking of the first prelates of Christianity. As in this miserable canoe he was exposed to all the inclemency of the weather, he reached Montreal on the twenty-first day of the month, after enduring all the rain, which was unusually heavy in that quarter.

The approach of the festival of Pentecost compelled him to stop on that island for the consolation of the French, many of whom had not yet seen him. He promised our Fathers that on the following Monday, the 25th of May, he would go and visit their Mission of Saint Xavier at la prairie de la Magdeleine; and he begged them to assure the Indians of the tenderness of his affection for them. This news caused great rejoicing in the village; and, as we have always impressed upon our catechumens and neophytes the esteem due to the character and merits of so worthy a bishop, it is impossible to express either the joy caused them by the mere hope of seeing him, or the ardor that they displayed, of their own accord, in preparing everything to give him the best reception in their power. Consequently, on the very same day, they began to clean and level the approaches, the streets, and the public place in their village; and



Kateri's Bishop, Monseigneur François de Laval

they continued this work on the following day, the eve of Pentecost. On Monday, which was the second day of the festival, after hearing his mass, they asked Father Frémin, their principal missionary, for permission to work at the preparations that they had been unable to make any earlier. Having obtained it, they all proceeded to the woods, whence each one brought back a load of branches; and with these they made a pleasant avenue in the public place, which extends from their chapel to the river Saint Lawrence. At the end of this avenue, on the bank of the river, where Monseigneur was to land, they placed a small platform raised about two feet above the water. In the middle of the same avenue, they erected a bower and at the door of the church, where the walk ended, there was still another green bower.

Happily, the weather was very fine on the day which he selected for honoring us with his visit. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon his canoe came in sight. Our Father Superior, who was then here, immediately embarked to go to meet His Lordship. At the same time, the church bell began to sound, and every one hastened to the place where Monseigneur would land. Father Frémin stood on the right, at the head of all his Indians; and Father Choleneq took the left, and with him all the French people. When Monseigneur's canoe was within speaking distance, The Captain of the Hurons, who had taken his place with the elders of the same nation on the platform, called out in a loud voice: "Bishop, stop thy canoe, and hear what I have to say to thee!" Monseigneur the bishop had been asked to permit that our Indians should practice the ceremonies

usual with them when they give receptions; and having had this compliment explained to him, he enjoyed their naive greeting. Accordingly, he readily halted to listen to these two orators, who harangued him in turn, assuring him of their joy, and the hope entertained by them that his presence would crown them with the blessings of Heaven. They praised his intellect, virtue, and dignity, which exalted him so high above other masters of the faith and the prayer; and invited him to come ashore among them, that they might conduct him at once to the house of the great master of our lives. Monseigneur then landed; and, having robed himself in his camail and rochet, he gave his blessing to all the people, who remained upon their knees. Father Frémin immediately intoned the "Veni Creator" in the Iroquois tongue, and was assisted by all the Indians, men and women, as is their custom. They accompanied him also in a sort of procession, which he headed, along the shaded walk which had been made for that purpose. Monseigneur walked after them, followed by all the Frenchmen, who chanted in Latin the "Veni Creator" alternately with the Indians. In this order the 1st bower was reached, under which Monseigneur halted, and a captain of the Onondaga and an elder from Oneida addressed him, in the name of all the 5 Iroquois nations. After that, they proceeded to the 2nd bower, under which His Lordship was addressed, for the 3rd time, by our devout catechist, named Paul,—who, being accustomed to speak often in public, when instructing his brethren, now offered his congratulations with a spirit, piety, and eloquence surprising in an Indian. Having mounted upon the stump of a tree, which

served him as a rostrum, he took off his hat and made the sign of the Cross. Then, lifting his eyes and his voice toward heaven, he thanked God for the favor that he had granted them in sending them the holy Bishop, his representative; and prayed, further, for the grace of profiting by his visit. Afterward, addressing His Lordship, he praised him for his zeal and his charity for souls, returning him a thousand thanks for his watchful care, extended equally to the French and the poor Indians. This address ended, Monseigneur entered the church, where Father Choleneq, in surplice, presented to him holy water and gave the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. At that ceremony the French and the Indians chanted again, in two choirs, the "Pange lingua," "Ave maris stella," and "Domine salvum fac regem,"—after which the Indians alone, men and women eternately, sang a second motet of the Blessed Sacrament. The Benediction ended, Monseigneur came into our house. Perceiving that the Indians were following him, he made the men come in and gave to all of them his hand to kiss, bestowing upon them many tokens of regard, especially on those who, as he was informed, were the most devout. Having gone into another room, he gave permission to the women to come in, in order that he might praise their piety in proportion to the good that was reported to him respecting each of them. At length he dismissed them, bestowing upon them all his blessing. It was also received by some infidel Iroquois, who had recently arrived from their own country, and who breathed only war and arrogance; for they paid all respect and submission to His Lordship, the same as our Christians gave...

The morrow, which was Whitsun Tuesday, was truly a day of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon this mission, through the grace of the sacraments which Monseigneur most gladly and kindly bestowed upon it, and which our Indians received with admirable modesty and devotion. He commenced, in the early morning, with the baptism of ten adults,—4 men and six women;—following this up with 3 marriages, at which he himself officiated. After that, he said Holy Mass, during which our Indians chanted and received communion,—in most cases, from his own hand. He further gave them Confirmation, permitting also the French who had not received it to join the Indians—for whose sake alone, he asserted, he had come. Father Frémin repeated to them, in the Indians tongue, the sermon which His Lordship preached to them in our own.

The morning having thus passed, there was given in his name a feast to all our Indians in a large cabin. As they knew that His Lordship was to be present thereat, they prepared for his suite places, which they decked out with all the most beautiful articles which they possessed. The feast, which was protracted,—rather by addresses, songs, and similar ceremonies than by eating,—being over, Monseigneur, not contenting himself with this favor granted to all in general, was further pleased, by an excess of his goodness and of his usual condescension, to visit each family, and each individual in his own cabin. Our Indians no sooner perceived this than, in order to show their gratitude for a favor so great, they decorated their cabins with all that was most precious in their scanty stores,—making ready a place wherein to seat His Lordship, and

spreading upon the ground, in some places, branches of trees, and others, handsomely worked mats; some laid down rich furs, others blankets of ratine and of similar stuffs. Monseigneur was greatly pleased and edified at all these sincere tributes of affection and respect; and, although it was late by the time he had visited all the people, the zeal which some parents showed to have him baptize their children resulted in our presenting to him seven of these, on whom he immediately conferred that Sacrament. He then assisted at Benediction, which took place as on the preceding

day. On the following morning, having again been pleased to say Mass for our Indians, who sang at it very well, as they usually do, he set out on his return to Montreal,—all bearing him company as far as the river, as had been done on his arrival. When he was on the point of stepping into his canoe, they knelt down to receive his benediction, which he again bestowed upon all assembled, who followed him with their eyes as far as they could see. He carried away all their Hearts, while leaving them his own.

**Jesuit Relations,  
LIX, 268-280.**

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss S. A. !**

I am enclosing a ten-dollar money order in thanksgiving to Kateri for helping me when I went to the doctor last week, and also to keep me in good health. I just discovered Kateri through a friend and am so grateful.

(Chicago, Ill.)

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss M. T. !**

Enclosed is a check for twenty-five dollars for whatever purpose you wish to use it for Kateri's Cause. This is to give thanks for my mother's successful surgery last year and to ask Kateri's continued help for our family and my mother, who has multiple medical problems. We do feel that Kateri's help has been shown to our family in many ways.

Also, I am the general chairman of the Discalced Carmelite Third Order Congress, which our Schenectady Chapter will host, August 14-17, 1975. One of the highlights of the Congress will be a trip to Auriesville. I expect that one of the Fathers will give a talk on the North American Martyrs and Kateri. I would like to order 400 cards with Kateri's picture and prayer. Please let me know the price of these. Each person attending the Congress will receive one, and perhaps, this will help to make Kateri a little better known. Those attending will be from all over the United States and a few delegates are from Canada . . .

(Schenectady, N.Y.)

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



## SECOND REUNION OF THE KATERI COMMITTEE



**THE SECOND MEETING** of the International Committee for Kateri's Beatification was held, as I wrote in the last issue of *Kateri*, at Fonda, N.Y., formerly Gandaouagué, the very spot where the Lily of the Mohawks was baptized in 1676 at the age of nineteen. The Conventual Franciscan Fathers made us feel quite at home in their beautifully restored one-hundred-and-fifty-year-old convent, which stands beside St. Peter's Shrine, so named after the chapel of the same name, erected by the early missionaries.

In the basement of the Shrine, the Friars patiently built up a Museum of Mohawk culture, which has been officially recognized by the State of New York as of great historic value. There is was that the meetings of the committee began on Friday evening, April 18, 1975, 299th anniversary of the baptism of the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.

Father Joseph S. McBride, Vice-Postulator for Kateri in the United States, welcomed the members, who came from every corner of the horizon, and handed out to each one the agenda of the different sessions. He recalled that next year, at the end of July and at the beginning of August, the International Eucharistic Congress would take place at Philadelphia, Penna. As it would be during the Bicentennial of the United States, the theme of the Congress would be "With liberty and justice for all." He was happy to inform the Kateri Committee that the Committee for the Eucharistic Congress of the N.C.B.C. in Washington, had set aside a booth for Kateri propaganda material, and had also authorized an Amerindian Eucharistic Celebration, to be sung

by the Iroquois Choir of the Mission of St. Francis Xavier from Caughnawaga. The Episcopal Committee had furthermore requested that an in-depth study of the Indians of America be made, taking into account the theme of the Eucharistic Congress. Finally, the N.C.B.C. had already launched a 1976 calendar containing a full-page colored picture of a beautiful statue of Kateri.

After Fr. McBride's opening words, the official name to be given to the Committee was discussed. It was finally decided to give it two names: *International Committee for the Tercentennial of Kateri Tekakwitha*, with reference to the Venerable's baptism three centuries ago; and *International Bicentennial Kateri Tekakwitha Committee*, with reference to the American Bicentennial and to the Eucharistic Congress.

The choice of committee members was the next question on the agenda. It was unanimously decided to accept any other candidates able to second the efforts of the Katerians. Four new members were thereupon admitted: Fathers Bernadine Golden and Salvador Pantano, O.F.M. Conv., Mrs. Solomon Cook of St. Regis (Hogansburg, N.Y.), and Mr. Joseph O'Brien, Jr., of Cleveland, O., who offered many constructive suggestions at each session of the Committee.

One of the first resolutions was to invite Bishop Gérard-Marie Coderre of Saint-Jean-de-Québec and Bishop Edwin E. Broderick of Albany, to be honorary co-chairmen of the International Kateri Committee. Both Canada and the United States would thus be represented.