

# KATERI'S BAPTISM

By P. F. X. de Charlevoix, S.J.

MEANWHILE Father Jacques de Lamberville arrived at Gandahouhagué, with orders to found a mission there. Tekakwitha then felt her former desires to become a Christian revive; but she was still for some time without mentioning it, either from respect to her uncle, who did not relish our religion, or from simple timidity. At last an opportunity came for avowing her conviction, and she was not wanting. A wound in the foot, which she had received, kept her in the cabin while all the other women were busy harvesting the Indian corn. Father de Lamberville, compelled to suspend his public instructions, which no one would attend, took this time to visit the cabins, and instruct those whom age or infirmity detained there. One day he entered Tekakwitha's cabin.

Unable to dissemble the joy which this visit caused her, she did not hesitate to open her mind to the missionary in the presence of two or three women, who were in company with her, on her design of embracing Christianity. She added that she would have great obstacles to overcome, but that nothing appalled her. The energy with which she spoke, the courage she displayed, a certain modest yet resolute air that lighted up her countenance, at once told the missionary that his new proselyte would not be an ordinary Christian. He accordingly carefully taught her many things, which he did not explain to all preparing for Baptism. God doubtless infuses into hearts, of which He has especially reserved possession, a sort of purely spiritual sympathy, forming even in this life the sacred bond which will unite them hereafter in the abode of glory. Father de Lamberville, whom I knew, was one of the most holy missionaries in New France, where he died, at Sault Saint Louis, spent with toil and austerity, and, if I may use the expression, in the arms of Charity. He often declared that in His first interview with Tekakwitha, he thought he could discern that God had great designs for that virgin; yet he would not exercise any haste in conferring Baptism on her, and he adopted in her case all the precautions that experience has counseled as necessary, to make sure of the Indians, before administering the Sacrament of regeneration.

The whole winter was spent in these trials, and on her side the young catechumen employed this precious time in render-



ing herself worthy of a grace, the importance of which she fully comprehended. Before granting it to adults, the missionaries take great pains to inquire privately into their conduct and morality. Father de Lamberville asked all who knew Tekakwitha, and was greatly surprised to find that there was not one, even among those who had given her most to suffer, but sounded her praises. This was all the more glorious for her, as Indians are much given to slander, and naturally inclined to put evil interpretation on the most innocent actions. The missionary accordingly no longer hesitated to grant her what she solicited with such earnestness. She was baptized on Easter Sunday, 1676, and received the name of Katharine.

The grace of the sacrament received into a heart which her uprightness and innocence had so well prepared, produced wondrous effects. Whatever idea the missionary had already conceived of the young Iroquois maiden, he was astonished to find in her, immediately after Baptism, not a neophyte needing to be confirmed in the Faith, but a soul filled with the most precious gifts of heaven, and whom he too would have to guide in the most sublime spiritual ways. At the outset her virtue excited the admiration even of those who were least inclined to imitate her; and those on whom she depended, left her free to follow every impulse of her zeal. But this did not last long. The innocence of her life, the precautions which she took to avoid all that could in the least affect it, and especially her extreme reserve as to whatever could in the slightest degree offend purity, appeared to the young men of her village a reproach on the dissolute life they led, and many laid snares for her intending only to dim a virtue which dazzled them.

The Positio

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

Enclosed is a small offering to Kateri for her intercession for me. I prayed to her when my father was in the hospital dying of pneumonia. He was in a critical state and had to have an emergency tracheotomy in order to save his life. A few weeks later he suffered another setback and suffered a cardiac arrest. He was hospitalized for a period of five months. I feel that Kateri helped intercede in my prayers for my dear father. I know that she heard my heart-filled prayers. Today my father is at home and doing well. To me this was a miracle, for he was almost dead.

(Houston, Texas)

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

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

I am now sending five dollars to Kateri this month and five dollars next month which I promised to her. The State was doing away with some positions in Mental Health, and my husband's position was one of the positions in question. Thanks to Kateri, he has his job which we are thankful for. I am happy to report that they are keeping all positions in his department. (Richmond, Va.)

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

Enclosed is the amount of my first payroll check. I prayed for a job; I did specify a certain one, but I feel fortunate that I got the one I have. I do still pray that I can get the job that I asked Kateri to help me get. I turn to Kateri many times for her help. (Austin, Minn.)

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

Please find check for Kateri's Cause, in thanksgiving for assistance with employment matters. (Bethlehem, N. H.)

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

In thanksgiving for a favor received from Our Lord through Kateri, a donation of twenty-five dollars is enclosed as promised. My daughter did obtain a teaching position a week before school opened in September. (Housatonic, Mass.)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss M. O'H. !**

Enclosed are five dollars, I promised for a favor I received from Kateri. I gave Kateri until Friday to find the check for sixteen dollars that my mother sent in for her automobile sticker for 1977 to the Registry of Motor Vehicles. She sent the check on September 1; one month went by: no word from the Registry. She had the bank call the Registry to see if the check was cashed. They said they thought the check was lost in the mail. She didn't want to lose her number plate. She has had the same number for thirty-three years. So Wednesday morning, the stickers came in the mail. My mother was so happy! I ran to my room and thanked Kateri over and over again. I say a rosary to her every day; she is wonderful. I wish to renew my subscription for another year.

(West Roxbury, Mass.)

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