

would make great progress in virtue." On the other hand, he was quite aware that many converts were content with receiving the sacrament of Baptism, followed by the gradual slackening of religious practice. Father Chauchetière wrote: "One has seen Indians become indifferent almost as soon as they have been baptized; one has seen them become worse than they were before Baptism, because they did not have the courage to disregard the human respect which is a common fault of these people. There is no doubt that the devil, regretting his prey, tempts new Christians all the more to make them lose grace as soon as they have received it. Indeed, it is a miracle when a Christian perseveres in the country of the Iroquois."

The hopes of the missionary and of the fervent Christians were not deceived. Kateri exceeded them all by her fervor during the following months. All her beautiful dispositions, hidden until then within the precincts of her long house, shone forth as soon as she was obliged to appear in public and to take part with the other neophytes in the common exercises of piety. She was a model of fidelity to the habitual reunions in the little chapel of St. Peter's, whether it was at Mass, at daily community prayer, or at the regular religious instructions, not to speak of fasting and abstinence as it was then observed.

Kateri was not satisfied with the ordinary spiritual itinerary of her Christian compatriots. The Holy Spirit had beckoned to her and she responded with all her heart. To the Jesuit Father she went to ask him to guide her on this strange new way that was opening out before her. She had her prayers, devotions, and penances approved by him, and showed herself so faithful to the plan of Christian perfection he proposed that in a short while the other converts were left far behind. Her companions were not slow to find in her a model of humility, devotion, sweetness, charity, and of the other Christian virtues. Even among those who had no intention of imitating her, the esteem they nevertheless had for her was quickly transformed into admiration. Father Jacques de Lamberville, her first spiritual director, better than anyone else sums up the first few months after her christening:

"Since that time I can say I have found nothing in her in which she would seem to have relaxed in the slightest from her first fervor." Indeed, the effects of the sacrament of Baptism in Kateri were exactly those the Holy Father expects of today's baptized Christians.



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