



Kateri at the Martyrs' Shrine

Reverend Father John de Brébeuf and the other Jesuit Fathers who began the Iroquois Missions have forced me to break the five-year silence I kept regarding what took place at the death and after the burial of the one [Kateri] whose life I am writing."

Iroquois Father Michael K. Jacobs, S.J., has long been aware of the Martyrs' being in rapport with Kateri. Last year, on September 26, he was present at the Indian Martyrs' Day celebration at the Shrine. This year, he suggested to Father James J. Farrell, Director of the Indian Missions for the Upper Canada Province of the Society of Jesus, and to Father Winston J. Rye, Director of the Martyrs' Shrine, that they have a bronze plaque cast, commemorating the tercentenary of the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha's christening on April 18, 1676, in the Mohawk Canton. At the same time, it would recall her escape from the Mohawk country, her arrival at the south bank of the St. Lawrence River to the

southwest of Montreal in October 1677, and her First Communion on Christmas Day 1677.

All morning long, groups of Indians from different parts of the Province rode up to the Shrine in buses and private cars. Father Jacobs, his sister, and brother-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Solomon Cook, members of the Kateri Bicentennial Committee, drove up from St. Regis, followed by a busload of their people.

As the special Mass for the Amerinds was to take place only at 1:30 P.M., there was plenty of time for the visitors to visit every corner of the beautiful Shrine property, including the lookout tower from which could be viewed Georgian Bay. There was also seventeenth-century Fort Ste. Marie reconstructed by the Province of Ontario, and the Museum, a carefully planned and beautifully executed realization.

Father Jacobs presided the Eucharistic Celebration with ten to twelve other priests celebrating. Two Indian deacons

also took part in the ceremony. The Vice-Postulator for the Beatification of the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha gave the homily.

Following the Holy Sacrifice, at 2:30 P.M., the entire congregation gathered round the statue

of the Lily of the Mohawks. Father Jacobs solemnly unveiled the plaque to the profound satisfaction of Kateri's brothers and sisters. "I want to be a Christian, even though I die for it," he read. Their prayers will certainly further her Beatification.

HOMILY FOR KATERI'S PEOPLE



LAST YEAR, we gathered here together at the Shrine of the Martyrs to honor specially the all too unknown Indian Martyrs of Canada, Mr. Peter Johnston so glowingly revealed to us.

Today we have come here to render homage to one of the most glorious figures of your racial and Christian heritage, the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, who was called the "Apostle of the Indians."

Before dying, Kateri's mother had been given the opportunity of opening the child's heart to the love of God, and Kateri yielded to the inspiration in all simplicity and had no other love in her heart than the love of God and the love of neighbor in harmony with the Divine Will.

In 1667, three blackrobes, Fathers Bruyas, Cholenec and Pieron, visited the Iroquois village of Kahnawaké on the Mohawk. They were providentially lodged in Tekakwitha's long house. She was

struck with their affable manners, their regularity in prayer. And they were impressed by her modesty and sweetness. Father Cholenec tells us: "God even then disposed her to the grace of Baptism for which she would have asked, if the missionaries had remained longer in her village."

The eleven-year-old girl grew into a small, delicate teenager. She lived somewhat apart from the others on account of her poor eyesight, busy, nevertheless, with the household chores, preparing the maize, soup or sagamité for the one formal meal of the day. She worked outside, when the weather permitted, at sowing Indian corn and at harvesting it.

In the autumn of 1675, Fr. de Lamberville made the rounds of the homes, attending to the aged and to the ill. He entered Tekakwitha's long house, and much to his surprise he found her within, incapacitated because of a sore foot. She was nineteen years old, she told the priest, and had been looking forward to Baptism since the age of eleven! During the autumn and winter, with a few others, she followed the missionary's instructions in preparation for the saving waters of life.

Before baptizing Tekakwitha, Fr. de Lamberville inquired about her conduct as he did whenever he