

heroes of the Faith, the saints of all times do?" The verdict unhesitatingly qualified the virtues as heroic.

The third session of the Congregation of Rites on the virtues met on June 9, 1942. This session of spiritual discernment took place before the Blessed Sacrament, after the last rather mild objections of the Promoter of the Faith had been heard as well as the responses of the Advocate. The unanimous conclusion of these experts surprised nobody: The Mohawk Maiden Kateri Tekakwitha had practised the Christian virtues heroically. The time had come to inform His Holiness Pius XII.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday, June 12, the Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, his Eminence Cardinal Salotti, bore the good news to the Pope, who ratified the decision of the Sacred Congregation and promised to issue the Decree on the heroic virtues of Kateri, after having taken the time to pray God to grant him greater light on the matter.

More than six months passed by. Finally, for the feast of the Epiphany, were summoned to the Vatican Cardinal Carlo Salotti, Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, Msgr. Salvatore Natucci, Promoter of the Faith, Msgr. Alfonso Carinci and other dignitaries of the same Congregation besides Fr. Carlo Miccinelli, S.J., Postulator General, with a few other guests.

With this small but select group attending, Pius XII celebrated the Eucharist at the end of which he proclaimed:

"It has been proved, in this instance and for the purpose under consideration, that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, Love of God and neighbor, and the cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, and subordinate virtues of the Venerable Servant of God, Catherine Tekakwitha, were heroic."

Although the reports on what followed are nonexistent, the habitual ceremonial for these occasions must have been observed. It is probably at this moment that Fr. Miccinelli thanked the Sovereign Pontiff, who responded graciously.

On a silver tray, had been placed twelve illuminated copies of the Decree, which was offered to the Pope; other more modest copies to Their Eminences; still others even more simple to the rest of the attendants. Everything was prescribed, the size and quality of the paper, the white ribbons fringed with gold, binding the gilt-edged Decrees together for the Holy Father, the purple and gold fringed ribbons for the Cardinals, and the plainest of all for the others.

After the distribution of these precious documents, the Decree was speedily posted on the doors of the great Roman basilicas and from then on, the Servant of God was known as the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.



THE
ORIGINAL
CAUGHNAWAGA
INDIANS

*

BLESSED
KATERI

*

HER
SAINTLY
PEOPLE:
PENITENTS
VIRGINS
MARTYRS

*

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