

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mr. L.P.!**

... I personally experienced a "little miracle of sorts" recently when I was hospitalized for removal of an acute diseased gall-bladder. Just prior to undergoing surgery, as I lay on the operating table, I felt moved to ask Kateri to watch over me and bring me through the surgery with no complications, and relatively free of pain. Did she ever hear me and answer my prayers! The next thing I recall is awakening in my room, with the operation complete. During my recuperation, I felt absolutely no nausea, had no drains, tubes, catheter, or real discomfort. The surgery took place on Wednesday, and they wanted to discharge me on Saturday of that same week, because of my amazing rapid recovery. I see this as a direct act of intercession by Kateri "The Lily of the Mohawks ..."

(Indian Orchard, MA)

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. F.K.!**

Blessed Kateri does hear one's prayers. My prescription sunglasses, left in the bank, did not turn up until five days later, quite unexpectedly, after I prayed to her, promising ten dollars—they were worth much more. What prompted that person to turn them in I wonder?

(Montreal, P.Q.)

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mr. H.N.!**

Enclosed is check and subscription list. There are two older women around here who are really working hard for Blessed Kateri. They should be recognized by you. They are the ones whose names I have starred on the list I enclose. Fair Cloud is a Piscataway Indian 80 years old, from Maryland, whose father was a chief here. She is cousin to Chief Turkey Tayac, who died in 78, the medicine man who taught me. Fair Cloud sent me a sacred object which had been touched to the relic you have. I hung it in my sweat lodge. Many people have been cured of everything from a headache to the most serious diseases in there, thanks to the above and Kateri. God bless you, keep up the good work.

(Glenelg, MD)

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. M.G.!**

Enclosed is a check for five dollars for a favor I received from Kateri Tekakwitha. I had a rash on my face and I promised to write and send a donation if she would clear it up. In a very short time it cleared completely. I have received many favors in the past.

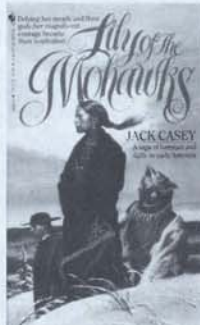
(Minersville, PA)

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

A BOOK REVIEW

LILY OF THE MOHAWKS

By Jack Casey, Bantam Books; 308 pages; \$3.50



This is a book I was most eager to read. The author and I have much the same background: Irish Catholic ancestry, early years in the Mohawk-Hudson Valley area, boyhood visits to the Martyrs' Shrine at Auriesville with my family and my school-mates. Like Mr. Casey I thrilled to the heroic sufferings of the Jesuit martyrs and the bravery and vigor of the Mohawk Indians they encountered. Tekakwitha was a household word in my home.

I heard her story not only from my parents but also from the Sisters of St. Joseph who taught me. Thus I was enthused on hearing that a historical novel was soon to appear about Blessed Kateri. It is with regret, however, that I must register my disappointment, now that the book has seen the light of day.

The author has stated that extensive research went into his work. His primary source is listed as the respected **Jesuit Relations**, and indeed a study of the book reveals that he is thoroughly familiar with the events in Mohawk history during Kateri's life span. Nonetheless, for one sensitive to historical detail there are many disturbing inaccuracies. Some details almost seem to have been deliberately shifted around. The following could be cited as examples: The turtle clan did not move their village to the Kanawaka site in 1663, but in 1667. An intermediate site between Ossernenon and Kanawaka occupied by the same clan from 1660 to 1667 is entirely eliminated in the story. The names of the two Mohawk villages further west are needlessly transposed. (Actually the bear clan village was in the middle, but it was called Andagaron, while the wolf clan village to the west was Tionnontake.) The Onondagas never held the Jesuit Father Simon Lemoyne captive. (The author seems to have confused this Jesuit, close friend of the chief Garacantie, with a French layman, Charles Lemoyne, who was in fact brought back to Quebec in bonds and dramatically released.) The Mohawk woman who cared for the young Kateri after the death of her parents was not Quoronta, the old widow which the author has invented, but Anastasia alias Tegonhatsiongo, friend of Kateri's mother. Finally no reference is made to Kateri's impaired vision. While the documents record that she was noted for her skill in em-

broidery, a feat of her nimble fingers, she could hardly have seen clearly enough to weave the animal patterns learned from the Dutch women of Fort Orange.

To be sure, the author of a historical novel should be free to take some leeway with times and places and even to invent characters to flesh out his story. However, in the prologue of this novel the author has committed himself to write "as truthful a story" as he could about Kateri. After a statement of this sort, inaccuracies and distortions are not what one would expect. Kryn, the great Mohawk, called Joseph after his baptism is called a half-breed, a description not supported by the documents. Why not give the Mohawks full credit for this noble warrior? Mr. Casey apparently considers Kryn as one and the same with the "Flemish Bastard," but in the **Relations** it is evident that the latter is an entirely different person. It would appear to be an unjustified exaggeration to use the opposition to the teachings of the blackrobes on the part of lowerano, Kateri's uncle, as grounds for turning him into a repulsive and insatiable monster. It was distressing to find Father Claude Chauchetiere portrayed as a priest with an unsavory past who entered the religious out of fear of hell and a desire to atone for youthful sins. There is no evidence to suggest that the Jesuit who guided Kateri along spiritual paths traveled only by a few was himself beset by "spiritual failings." Moreover it is insulting to the memory of a fervent and dedicated missionary to have him ask the most injudicious of questions to the courtesan of Versailles and to Kateri herself when they came to him in confession. The author often blames the French for trying to destroy the Iroquois confederacy by the indiscriminate sale of liquor, yet the only orgies in the narrative brought on by the sale of liquor to the Mohawks is accurately ascribed to the Dutch. In point of fact it was only after Tekakwitha's time that the French regime lost its scruples about plying the Indians with intoxicants, and even then the Jesuits supported by their great protector Bishop de Laval long succeeded in confounding the liquor merchants .

It is in the treatment of Blessed Kateri herself that the book becomes most objectionable. While the author admittedly catches the Indian love of imagery and describes in a number of beautiful passages the poetic flights of the young Tekakwitha, he runs the risk of explaining away her holiness. To the two priests who became her biographers Kateri's life was a miraculous instance of the workings of divine grace upon human nature, but as Mr. Casey tells her story, Kateri shies away from marriage and chooses to remain a virgin because of the traumatic childhood experience of coming upon her uncle as he violates and murders a captured young French

girl. Kateri then discovers the water from the melting snow to be her special life medicine and eventually is drawn to baptism in her obsession to be washed clean from all stain of blood. This psychologizing, while appealingly poetic, leaves little room for the supernatural workings of the Spirit in bringing Kateri on her journey to Christ by the light of the gospel.

Finally, it is among the descendents of Kateri's own people that the book has been judged most offensive. It can only be wished that Mr. Casey had sought out some of the many well-informed modern Mohawks before beginning his story. There is great insensitivity and in some instances exaggeration in the author's descriptions of seventeenth-century Mohawk life, when with the superiority and condescension of all too many whites he generalizes with adjectives such as "brutal" and "savage" and "pagan." Yet grace builds on nature and within a generation of Kateri's birth many of her people had outdone one another in the practice of Christian asceticism. Would this ever have occurred unless the Spirit had worked among a people who already had a desire for the good and a longing for the virtuous?

Thomas F. Egan, S.J.

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

I'm sorry to be so late sending more money for your publication of "**KATERI**". Please find enclosed ten dollars I promised Blessed Kateri if she helped me with the health of my little girl. Of course, she came through for me again. I shall try to send some money every month from now on. Thank you again.

(St. Albert, Alta)

❖ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. H.S.W.!**

Enclosed is my check representing the balance of the sum I promised Kateri, for answering my prayers. My daughter-in-law is now in good health and our new grandson is doing fine also. Kateri has ben very good to me and mine and my prayers for her canonization are said daily. May it happen soon. At the present time we are enduring a terrific heat spell as you probably read in the papers or hear on the radio. Speaking of "hearing" I still am totally deafened but gradually adjusting to it. However, I do not give up hope that it will be restored some day through God's will. With best wishes for a pleasant summer and blessings on you and all those working for Kateri's cause.

(Queens Village, NY)

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