



We are ambassadors  
for  
Christ.

II Corinthians 5:20

## WE ARE THE LILIES

TODAY'S COVER gives us a glimpse of the first American Indian as well as the first native American layperson to be beatified, the last step before becoming a saint in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Kateri Tekakwitha, "Lily of the Mohawks," was born in New York state in 1656 to a Mohawk chief and a Christian Algonquin woman. When she was four, her parents and baby brother died of smallpox; her uncle assumed Kateri's care. Around 1675, a missionary, Jacques de Lamberville, who probably baptized Kateri, came to the area to teach Christianity. Her interest and devotion to the ways of Jesus grew, creating fear and hostility within her foster family. Kateri, only twenty, was stoned and driven away.

Legend has it that she walked two hundred miles to Montreal to a Christian Indian village where she devoted the rest of her life to God's work. In church tradition, she became a nun,<sup>1</sup> working dutifully and joyfully in the ways of the Master. She lived out her life in total poverty and charity and died at twenty-four of tuberculosis.

Kateri's holiness was acknowledged by French missionaries, who knew her and called her "blessed." The Indians of her village and missionaries who were inspired by her faith prayed to her for favors and cures. Many requests for help were answered.

The lily flower carries a fragrance of rare beauty. Just as Kateri, we as the people of Jesus Christ are lilies, ambassadors who live to carry and share the message (fragrance) with others (flowers):

All this is from God who through  
Christ reconciled us to God  
giving us the ministry of reconciliation  
not counting our trespasses,  
entrusting the message to us.

—Pamela Baker Lineberger,  
Native American Church Development, N.C. Annual Conference

Cover: "Lily of the Mohawks." Photo by Al Konieczny

1. Not so.