



*Danse tribute to time and life at the four corners of the Mother Earth,
before a eucharistic celebration*

Finally the natives showed their attachment to their customs and elders (many older Chiefs were present, with their wives). Their will to make liturgy their own was also evident. The use of incense in the celebrations was preeminent, the pipe of peace also, the singing in the vernacular, the colored offerings by so many tribes. All this in unity.

May Blessed Kateri help to implement the resolutions of the Conference in every tribe and every Native, bringing new dimensions and at the same time a new intimacy with a Church that is their "own."

Jacques Bruyère, S.J.

✧ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. P. G.!**

Kateri has helped me again. I have a serious medical condition and take an anti-coagulant daily. I had a drug reaction and was bleeding internally. Kateri helped me and the bleeding stopped without the need of surgery.

(Old Bridgew, NJ)

✧ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mrs. V. K.!**

I am enclosing a check for one hundred dollars to Kateri for granting me the grace of having a good eye examination. I have glaucoma and the pressure has to be checked every four months. I also pray for the canonization of Kateri.

(Baltimore, MD)

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

Tribute to Fr. Béchard, s.j.

**FATHER HENRI BÉCHARD, S.J.
CANADIAN VICE-POSTULATOR**

By Mary-Eunice

We first heard of Father Henri Bechard when my husband, Joseph Spagnola, accompanied two religious to see the areas where Kateri Tekakwitha lived. They visited Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons who helped to open her cause for sainthood. Then a visit to St. Peter's in Fonda, N.Y., where Kateri was baptized. This led them to the Martyrs' Shrine in Auriesville, N.Y., where they visited with the Vice-Postulator, Father Thomas Coffey, S.J. After a tour of the sacred grounds, he suggested they go to Kahnawake and meet the Canadian Vice-Postulator, Father Bechard. So they traveled to Kahnawake and met him. He welcomed the travelers and his hospitality was so generous they would never forget him. The Canadian Vice-Postulator mentioned it was his duty to take care of the Star of the New World. (It was a title she received when she was declared Venerable.)

Father told them how she escaped from the Mohawk Valley and with an Indian guide was brought into the Kahnawake area to what was known as "Land of the Praying Indian." There she lived a life of prayer and helped the elderly and those that were ill. There she received her first Holy Communion on Christmas Day. After her death many favors and cures were reported. Her bones were resting in a glass case in the Mission of St. Francis Xavier Church. Father Bechard felt she should have the dignity of having a tomb and other people of the reservation felt the same. Father helped to eventually bring it about.

After Fr. William Schlaerth, S.J. was Vice-Postulator in the U.S. Father Joseph S. McBride took his place. Father McBride did visit us in our home at Belford, N.J. and asked me to do my character sketch monologue on THE LIFE OF KATERI TEKAKWITHA on Indian weekend at the Auriesville Shrine. At that time I met Fr. Michael Jacobs, Pastor of St. Regis Mission Church and only full blooded Jesuit Indian priest... and finally I met Father Bechard. The two were a wonderful combination. Father Bechard would bring the Kahnawake Choir who sang the Mass in their native tongue and Fr. Jacobs would bring the dancers

and they would entertain the people visiting the shrine. At one of our celebrations in 1970, I remember seeing Fr. Bechard dancing along with the Mohawks and he enjoyed it. He liked the celebrations and seldom ever turned down an invitation. Everybody enjoyed his friendship.

But Father worked hard to spread the cause of Kateri, wrote articles and was the Editor of the magazine *Kateri*. It was produced both in English and French. Many times traveling across the United States with our programs we would find *Kateri* in libraries and schools.

Still Father Bechard was not satisfied and so he had the idea of asking people to pray for the cause of Venerable Kateri... offering one Our Father, one Hail Mary and three Glory be to the Father until the miracle needed for canonization was obtained. Thousands of people signed the pledge of prayer for Tekakwitha.

We did many programs together and then we planned our part in the Eucharistic Congress to be held in 1976. The Vice-Postulators, Fr. Bechard and Fr. McBride had on the committee such people as: Fr. Ronald Schultz, Pastor of St. Peter's, Fonda, Fr. Tom Egan, Director of Auriesville shrine, Fr. Robert Fleig,



Back row, fourth from the left, Father Henri Béchard, S.J., with the members of the Committee preparing Kateri's stand for the Eucharistic Congress of Philadelphia in 1976. Front row, extreme right, Mary-Eunice Spagnola

Chet Adams, the Joe O'Brien's from Cleveland, Ohio, Sarah Hassenplug, Mohawk, Anne Scheuerman, Tekakwitha camera person, Joe Spagnola and myself. Solomon Cook of Hogsburg, N.Y. and Princess Esther Phillips of Kahnawake were selected as chairpersons. Tom Constantino with his usual generosity supplied the booth. We felt that with our work at the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, Pa., thousands began knowing Kateri.

Father Bechard wrote a book called *THE ORIGINAL CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS*. It was about the faith of the early native people. Caughnawaga (now called Kahnawake) numbered warriors, mystics and martyrs within its area. The book inspired many because of the faith of the people in those early days. Father also wrote many articles on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He said Kateri had a great love for Jesus and we should emulate her faith.

When it was announced that Kateri would be Beatified, we were thrilled. Father Henri would say to Anne Scheuerman and Tom Constantino: "See the value of prayer petitions... Look! God listened to the people and now Kateri is to be Blessed!" Three separate pilgrimages, two from the United States and one from Canada, including over 400 Native Americans, attended the beatification Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. At the ceremony I had the honor of sitting between Fr. McBride and Fr. Bechard. Later that day we had the audience with the Holy Father and I was so proud of the two Fathers when they were embraced by the Holy Father. Both came back from the trip saying that they must work harder than ever before... and they did!

After more promotion and work at the shrine, we began to lose many of our friends such as Father Jacobs, Tom Constantino, Princess Esther, Fr. Fleig, Joe O'Brien, and Father McBride.

Father Bechard always reminded us that Blessed Kateri, when on the hunt, would send her angel guardian to the Mission to attend Mass for her each morning. So Father implored all of us to send our angels to Rome to the Congregation for the causes of saints to encourage the members to examine favorably the documents concerning the cures attributed to Blessed Kateri. He reminded us to pray for new members so

they might take up the cause and when Kateri is sainted they will carry on the work making her known to those that have not had a chance to become acquainted with this remarkable soul.

It was St. Joseph's Day, March 19, 1990, at the age of 80, that Father Henri Bechard was called home to God. He was buried from St. Francis Xavier Church and laid to rest at St. Jerome Cemetery. (St. Joseph must have welcomed him on that special day.) Both Fr. Bechard and Father McBride must be busy working, as it is hoped soon two miracles will be coming forthone presented by Father Bechard and the other from Father McBride. What a consolation to know we have those two saintly souls working for us in the heavens... and it would not surprise me at any time to hear of the canonization of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha.

✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Miss H. A.!**

First of all I would like to let you know that I have changed my address from Middlesex, England to Angus, Scotland. This was due to Blessed Kateri who made it possible when all hope had gone. My mother and I had no way of achieving this without Kateri's help and intercession on our behalf. I want this known that it was done in a matter of weeks. My mother is 80 years old this year and suffers from osteoarthritis and her sight is very bad. She only has sight in one eye and the other eye is going fast. My mother holds Kateri dear to her and is praying her sight can stay for a little long and that she may be left on this earth for a little while longer to enjoy her new home... I ask most faithfully for your prayers for my mother and, if possible, could you send me some of the Blessed Kateri prayers for her canonization which I will distribute at my church for all the help she has given. May God love, bless and protect you all.

(Angus, Scotland)

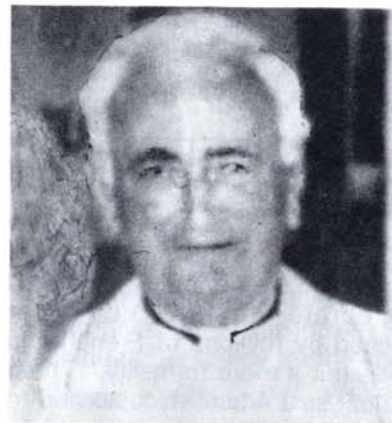
✿ **Kateri's smile upon you, Mr. and Mrs. R. D.!**

Early this year, my husband and I placed our ten year old son in Blessed Kateri's care. We had become so concerned about his rebellious attitude, that we both felt that extra prayers, novenas and intercessions were required. As a result, we placed our son in Blessed Kateri's care, and promised that if a significant change occurred in his attitude, we would send fifty dollars toward her cause as a sincere token of our gratitude. Enclosed please find the cheque as promised and we praise God for His Communion of Saints who intercede for us.

(Saskatoon, Sask.)

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

Tribute to Fr. Béchard, s.j.



Beyrouth, May 25, 1990

Dear Albert,

The return to the Father of our dear Father Henri Bechard, has plunged me in deep sadness. I was informed of it by a friend of Kateri who attended his funeral and I immediately started a series of Masses for the repose of his soul. It is during my first stay in Montreal in 1964 that I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance and his precious friendship has never left me since. So I am infinitely grateful to you for your letter and for all the comforting details that it brought me concerning his unexpected departure.

I offer you and all the staff at the Kateri Center, with whom I share the sorrow and mourning, my most sincere condolences. Moreover the "friendly and happy smile" of Father Henri before he left you, as you mentioned in your letter, makes me think of the words of Our Lord before he left His disciples: "If you love me, you will rejoice that I am going to the Father."

Thanks again for your kind letter and for the Mass Stipends. I am sure that I can count on your kindness to continue sending me regularly *Kateri* that I receive with joy and which allows me to share your prayers and your concern for the Cause of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.

Rest assured, dear Albert, of my sincere friendship in Jesus.

Father Antoine Roussos, S.J.