

At Kanesatake

## BLESSING OF A BLESSED KATERI STATUE

A.A.Q. and OKAMI magazine

On April 21st, at 2:30 pm, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, all radiant, was expecting her guests in the splendor of this historical Church of the Annunciation Parish, in Oka.



Mr. Marcel Demers, P.S.S., the pastor, opened the ceremony addressing a word of welcome to the faithful. Many came from afar, under a pouring rain.

The initial prayer was the one used to ask for the Canonization of Blessed Kateri. Amidst the praying crowd, the sculptor of the statue, Jacques Bourgault, presented his homage to the young Indian girl in a very special manner.



Sr. Marie-Laure Simon, C.N.D., read the prayer, Mr. Philippe Quevillon, the Epistle and Fr. Louis-Marie Turcotte, trappist, the Gospel.

Here are some extracts of the homily pronounced by Mr. Demers:

*When we wish to recall the life of Kateri Tekakwitha, nothing extraordinary comes to our mind. And if we are ever asked why she is a saint, we are at times taken aback to find an answer.*



*Most certainly she mortified herself in many exceptional ways; most certainly she pronounced a vow of virginity in a cultural environment that seemed unable to comprehend it; most certainly she suffered various humiliations because of her faith, but we can foresee that these are not the essential aspects.*

*It is in her daily life that Kateri showed most impressively her holiness, in the humble actions of her every day existence. Her attention to others and to her Lord was clothed by an exceptional quality but did not make her do anything spectacular.*

*Her seductive power was exercised in a mild manner. For example, people would like to go to the Mission church at the same time as she went, in order to see her pray. On her part, there was no ostentation whatever, but others could perceive, through her, an authentic communion with the Lord.*

*And still we find heroism in her life. For example, she would abstain from eating meat on Sunday. To be faithful to her Lord, she would not work on that day, and the others would therefore refuse to give her food. She found that the love of God was more important than food.*

*The sanctity of Kateri was then exercised, as we saw, in the humble unfolding of daily life and also in her radical choices.*

*After Kateri discovered Jesus, she understood that He was the treasure of her life. It was worthwhile renouncing everything else to own this treasure, this expensive pearl. At the age of 20, Kateri discovered with wonder the one who was to give meaning to her whole life.*

*Now, we, aren't we sometimes worn-out and blasé Christians? Hasn't routine choked our power of amazement?*

*To take interest in Kateri is to accept a challenge: the one of recovering a new impulse, a new freshness in our Christian life.*



The congregation listened with great composure, filled with emotion, the Ave Maria of Gounod sung by a soprano, Carol Cree, who also interpreted the Our Father in English and the "Prière" of Fauré in French. Mrs. Francine Ouellette accompanied the singer.

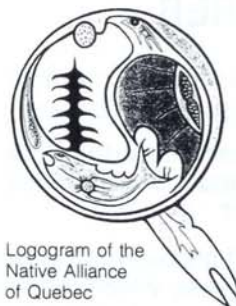
After the prayers of the faithful, read by Mr. Guy Bélisle, a prayer to the Mohawk virgin and the singing of Our Father, then the proper blessing of the statue by Rev. Fr. Marcel Demers, P.S.S.

This sculpture in yellow pine, life-size, is the work of this renowned Quebec artist, Jacques Bourgault of Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, QC.

The ceremony was enhanced by the presence of representatives of the civil state: Mrs. Lise Bourgault, federal member of Parliament of Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes, Mr. Jean-Guy Bergeron, provincial delegate of Deux-Montagnes, Mr. Roger Paquin, member of the National Bureau of direction of the Parti Québécois.

Two singers accompanied by an accordeon, Mrs. Mavis Cree Étienne and Helen Cree, livened up the feast.

The admirers without exception offered their sincere congratulations to the artist and those who collaborated in some way to the success of the celebrations.



Logogram of the Native Alliance of Quebec



After the religious ceremony, most of the invited guests went to the Kanesatake gymnasium for the launching of a special issue of the OKAMI magazine (Oka-Ami), journal of the Historical Society of Oka, sponsored by the

Alliance Autochtone du Québec. Mr. Philippe Quevillon, coordinator of the feasts and president of the AAQ, Oka Section, warmly welcomed the attendants.

After having mentioned the presence of many religious and political personalities as well as the honorific Abenaki Chief, Mr. Jean-Guy Landry, Mr. Quevillon stressed the point that the AAQ was happy to be able to communicate with all the members of the audience, Quebecers, Metis or Indians and that it desired "to lay the foundations of friendship and of fraternity so that the two communities may continue to live side by side respecting each one's identity. "It's a challenge we gave ourselves and it's a realistic one."

Amongst other homages rendered to many personalities, a peace pipe, full of symbols and named "Kanesatake" was offered to the Historical Society of Oka represented by the president himself, Mr. Noël Pominville.

A delicious buffet of friendship was served gratuitously to close the celebration.

N.B. For more information on Alliance Autochtone du Québec, available in English, please write to:

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