

Blessed Kateri shows the way

Here's a genuine story of a lady-painter, much in love with Kateri, half-blind like her, who adventured to make a painting of Tekakwitha. This painting is now hanging in the little museum of The Shrine in Kahnawake and many people intrigued maybe by the darkness of its colors (one side is particularly black) would like to know the story behind it.

Jean Hersh, the painter, passed away October 2, 1987. Her two sons, Leonard and Charles brought the painting to the Mission on May 28, 1990. As she was blind, while working on her piece of art, she had to ask the boys if the colors were appropriate. Even the one side of the painting is so dark that it shows the black side of her life... as she grew older, getting close to God's light, when things must have brightened up for her.

After completion, Jean told her boys that this painting should go to Kateri's Shrine. After three years, the brothers decided that the painting should be finally placed at the Shrine. They left New Jersey, one morning, for the Shrine, not knowing where they were going except that they were on their way to Quebec, Canada, "going out to taste French cuisine" as they laughingly explained, thinking seriously that this was going to be a "wild goose" chase, but at least, they will have done their mother's will and accomplish her last desire. But in reality, in their hearts, they felt it was a lost cause before starting.

The customs officer asked them what they were bringing over to Canada. "A saint!" they answered. "A live one? Are there still live ones today?" "Well, said the boys, for our mother, she was so much alive..."

As it turned out, Kateri was guiding them, leading them to her last desti-



nation. The Hersh brothers arrived in Montreal. They inquired here and there about the whereabouts of the Shrine of Kateri. No one had an answer. They finally decided to look in a directory under the title of Parishes, saw an English name, called and to their amazement, Father said: "Oh! you are closer to the Shrine than you think. You are about ten miles away.

"After their short telephonic conversation, they called at the Shrine in Kahnawake, and our good and effective secretary, Mrs Françoise Bruyère, answered their questions: "Why are you calling the Shrine of Kateri? What makes you so special in connection with Kateri? How do we get there? When are you opened?" After receiving this information they finally decided, yes, this has to be the place. Yes, Kahnawaké, here we come! They arrived at the Shrine around 3:30 p.m., on a beautiful sunny day with the mothers's painting. We chatted over a cup of coffee to be told the extraordinary event of their trip. They were full of joy, thankful to Kateri for her guidance and convinced that she is alive (as their mother always said) keeping the promise that she made on her death-bed: "I will come to the help of those who seek."

Our Pastor of the day, Fr. Leon Lajoie s.j. after learning of the history of the painting, soon had the painting put up in the small souvenir room where it can be seen by all those who come to the shrine.

We are most grateful to Mrs Jean Hersh, the painter, and to those who delivered the masterpiece, Dr Leonard Hersh from New York and his brother, Mr Charles Hersh from New Jersey.

Thank you and may our dear Blessed Kateri smile upon you for a job well done!

Sr Rosalyn G. s.s.a.

KATERI CENTER NEWS

FAVORS registered at the Kateri Center from February 2 to May 6, 1994.	
Articles Found	6
Better Health	10
Business Problem Solved	1
Cures	12
Employment Found or Kept	10
Financial Aid	1
Lodgings	4
Properties Bought or Sold	7
Safe Pregnancies	2
Safe Trips	5
Successful Studies	3
Successful or Averted Operations	10
Temporal Favors	10

Twenty-five Prayer Pledges or More

Mrs. Irène Poll, Montreal, Qc, 36; Mr. Edouard Toutant, St. Hyacinthe, QC, 58, Rev. Leo Raymond, Lachute, QC, 37; A Sister of Mary Reparatrix, Montreal, QC, 35.

Kateri's Feastday in Kahnawaké

On April 17, at 9 a.m.: snow. At 10 a.m.: rain. At 12 p.m., before the celebration, a sun galore. Then the swords of the many Knights in full regalia - 40 strong with a few daughters of Isabella - from Plattsburg, Montreal and Kahnawaké, shone in the scented air.

Entering the church, the crowd was surprised to find Bishop Bernard Hubert "transformed" into F. John Walsh... (because of illness, it is the first time in 16 years, that the Bishop misses this day). Fr Walsh asked for group identification: Philipinos, Indians from India, Americans from Virginia, Maine, New York, Canadians from Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Lachine, and of course many people from Kahnawaké.

The church was filled with Kateri's friends and the Mohawk Mixed Choir filled the hearts of all the lovely mellow sounds. As usual, all the hymns were sung in Mohawk and one could only recognize a few words, as "Arreteria" and "Kateri Tekakwitha". All this coloration of people would have

pleased Kateri who, loved everybody because of her love of the cross. Hence she believed that the Lord crucified came to save every one.

The liturgy prepared by Fr Louis Cyr S.J., the pastor, was most impressive with Indian rites introduced in the Mass. Fr Walsh in his monily, pointed out the actuality of Blessed Kateri. Kateri, half-blind from measles, holding her cape to shade her from the intensity of the sun, even having tricks played on her as she cared for the Longhouse, she began to be known as Tekakwitha, "she who stumbles," all the while she grew in her love for her people and her love for Jesus. Kateri is known as the Lily of the Mohawks, the Lily sign of the great Easter message we have just celebrated, that death has no hold over us, there is victory in the Resurrection, there is life after death, there is life on earth which even when we stumble we will be forgiven. Kateri Tekakwitha is our perfect example, we who are stumbling can be assured that Jesus will always forgive us. Kateri, of the Turtel Clan, Lily of the Mohawks, Blessed of the Church and soon to be Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. The lover of the cross of Jesus, here on the banks of the Saint-Lawrence River, here at Kahnawake, here in this church where she remains the example, par excellence, the example of the Nation of the Mohawks and for the whole world."

After the ceremony, all participants were invited to come forward and venerate the relic of Blessed Kateri. A lovely token of respect and faith to a saint who never asked for that but who must be happy seeing her own people and so many friends brought to Jesus by her.

After this spiritual banquet followed another in the Kateri Hall. As usual, all this abundance - there were "seconds" - was prepared by discreet volunteers and the bill paid even more quietly by the Knights of Columbus of Kahnawake.

Blessed Kateri, pray for us!

Jacques Bruyère S.J.