

## A Letter to

### *Kateri Tekakwitha*

Dear woman of courage and faith,  
Mystic of the wilderness, Sage of the valley,  
Listener to the Spirit-who-whispers-within,  
Mohawk maiden, Servant of the poor.  
Blessed are you among Native people.

Given the lovely name Te ka kwitha,  
You remain for your people forever  
"She-who-puts-things-in-order,"  
The name you received, orphaned, half-blind  
And scarred by smallpox for life.

At baptism, washed by the Spirit of Fire and Rain,  
You walked through water with Moses, Sarah and Jesus,  
And were christened Kateri after wondrous Sienna,  
A woman of another time and a distant culture,  
Destined to become an exemplar for all anishnabeg.

You saw more clearly than a wide-eyed fawn  
The hurts and needs of those around you -  
The little ones, the sick, the old people,  
And your face, though fine pottery scratched,  
Glowed with the aura of a child of Gitchi Manitou.



Then, after only twenty-four years,  
you died.  
Your face, scars healed,  
shone like the morning sun.  
Now, years later, dear woman  
of courage and faith,  
She-who-puts-things-in-order,  
walk with us,  
Kateri, and teach us all  
to live, to serve, to love.

**Fr. Martin Machovec, OMI**

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things  
I cannot change,  
Courage to change the  
Things I can,  
And wisdom to know  
the difference.

