

## Kateri never gave up

*(Homily on the Feast of Blessed Kateri)*

My dear sisters and brothers,

**N**ative people know how important the Great Spirit is for all humankind... Native people address their prayers to the Creator and ask for the Great Spirit to guide them. There is also great joy in the Catholic Church throughout the world because she recognizes that one of the Mohawks, the Lily of the Mohawks, Kateri, lived her life in an authentic and heroic Christian manner. Today a number of symbols come together: the Easter Lily is a sign of the Resurrection and new life; the Lily of the Mohawks is also a sign of the Resurrection and her new life of faith; the Creator offers us the gift of Spring; Jesus, the Christ, offers us renewal.

Kateri's renewal of faith, hope and peace caused her to be scorned and laughed at. She was sarcastically called "The Christian" Finally she fled her native home and took refuge in this community of Kahnawake. She knew that here in this Christian - Catholic Community she would be supported in her quest to live out the Gospel which Jesus had presented to her. Kateri wanted to live a life of faith, hope and peace. She bore the Cross proudly and she proudly professed her faith in Jesus who gave meaning to her life. She had attempted to be baptized on a couple of occasions but to no avail. But Kateri never gave



up. When she was baptized she persisted all the more to witness to the faith, hope and peace she knew God offered her. Tekakwitha means she who stumbles, a nickname she received from those who knew of her difficulty to see as a result of having a severe case of measles. She may have tripped and stumbled when people placed objects in her path, but she never stumbled in her witness to Jesus and never tired of telling people of her faith. At twenty four years old she died and was buried; her remains are now

venerated in this Church and the universal church rejoices that one so fair and one so young would have such incredible love for the Cross and know how much Jesus loves us. Kateri knew and believed the message Jesus brought from the heart of the Creator, that God was our Father, and how the Creator wanted all people to live in faith, love and peace. We have the Spirit to witness to the messenger from the Creator, Jesus Christ.

...Today we celebrate the Feast of Blessed Kateri. Her life is an example for us. Her example invites us to live in profound Christian communion and she encourages us to follow her example and be proud to be Christian. Peace is a gift and it is also a mission. When Jesus says to his disciples: As the Father has

sent me so also I send you; he sends us to build peace into our lives and into the life of the community. Peace is to be found in our hearts, in our families and among nations.

We now turn to the table where Kateri found her strength to live her faith, hope and peace. It is a table of communion. At the Eucharistic table we promise to love one another and to love our enemies and pray for them. At the Eucharist we break bread and share the cup, the Body and Blood of Christ. On this day we take pride in Kateri's celebration of life. We celebrate her life when we become peace-makers. The Eucharist is our commitment to be peace-makers.

**Bishop Jacques Berthelet**  
c.s.v.

*Diocese of Longueuil - St-Jean*

The K. of C.  
Guard  
of Honor  
gets ready  
to launch  
Kateri's  
Feastday.

