

Jesuit pans Times review

I examined very attentively the review, by Ray Beauchemin, of *Kaia'tanó: ron Kateri Tekakwitha*, in the *Catholic Times* of March 1995. Here are the main observations I could easily verify:

The reference to *Beautiful Losers* by Leonard Cohen (1966) is unfortunate. Cohen is certainly one of the best Anglo-Canadian novelists. But the book which presents itself as a biographical novel of Kateri Tekakwitha, amongst others, is written by an author who hardly knows about Christianity, and much less about the Mohawks. It is then regrettable that Ray Beauchemin associates this work with that of Fr. Béchar, which is so much more serious.

The second paragraph of the review is also depreciated by the comparison between the title of the first part of Fr. Béchar's work, entitled "(1634-1677)," and the title of the first section of Cohen's book, entitled "The History of Them All."

The fourth paragraph already proves that the reviewer ignores the historical sources that he quotes, the *Jesuit Relations*, the accounts of Cholenec and Chauchetière. If he knew them, he would'nt write that "when Béchar strays from documentation, his biography lapses into supposition and fiction."

What precedes is abundantly proven by the following paragraph about Fr. Béchar's chapter 13, where the reviewer employs the only precise and explicit quotation (Béchar, pp. 99 to 103 in the English version, pp. 99 to 102 in the French version). After quoting Fr. Béchar in connection with Kateri's way of life while on hunting expeditions and after referring to her nostalgia of the

Church, Beauchemin speaks ironically about the lack of proof. Now all this is found, at times literally, with more details, in the work of Fr. Cholenec, *Vie de Catherine Tegakoüita, première Vierge Iroquoise (1696)*, pp. 20-23.

If the reviewer had known the sources which exist, he could not have concluded that the proof of the sanctity of Kateri is to be searched for only in her apparitions after her death. If one knows about the process of canonization, he is aware that the first step is to prove the practice of the heroic virtues by the saint-to-be, thus during his/her life.

In Beauchemin's last paragraph, it is inaccurate to say that the spelling of the world Tekakwitha on the cover - where it is spelled "Tekahkwitha" - is a mistake. It is the way that Fr. Cholenec writes her name in the text published in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères*, Lyon, 1819, p. 26. It is the way it is taught today in the immersion Mohawk classes, in Kahnawake.

I believe that these explanations restore the facts. No author nor reviewer can interpret an Indian spiritual life of the 17th century with the perspectives and prejudices of the 20th century.

Therefore, the title itself of the review, which hints at the excesses of Fr. Béchar's book, seems to me, at times, exaggerated and unjustified in view of what we believe is a strong cause for canonization. In addition, the canonization of Kateri would be favorable to the promotion of reconciliation between Mohawks and other Canadians. ■

Fr. Jacques Bruyère, SJ,
Vice-Postulator Kahnawake
Montreal Catholic Times, May 95

KATERI NEWS

FAVORS registered at the Kateri Center from February 14, to May 3, 1994.

Articles Found	2
Better Health	14
Cures	7
Employment Found or Kept	14
Financial Aid	1
Happy Death	1
Lodgings	1
Peace in Families	2
Peace at Work	1
Properties Bought or Sold	3
Return to the Faith	1
Safe Trips	6
Successful or Averted Operations	4
Successful Studies	4
Temporal Favors	6

Twenty-five prayier Pledges or More

Rev. Léo Raymond, Lachute, QC, 39,
Mme Irène Poll, Montreal, QC, 26.

Very good News...

While three American Cardinals are promoting Kateri's Cause very strongly, the Vice-Postulator in Kahnawake received a letter from His Eminence Cardinal J-P Turcotte, Archbishop of Montreal, also a member of the committee for the canonization of saints in Rome: "I have received your letter and I thank you for it. I have taken good note of your request in favor of Blessed Kateri.

Please believe me that if I have to say a good word about the Cause my support is assured.

Thank you for your confidence in me; I beg you to accept the expression of my devoted sentiments in the Lord."

Blessed Kateri Award

The Kateri Tekakwitha Committee of St. Lucy's Church in Syracuse, NY has just been chosen to receive the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha League's Annual Blessed Kateri Award. The Award will be presented at the Annual Blessed Kateri Mass on Sunday, July 16th at noon in the Coliseum, Auriesville, New York. If you are able to join us at this award ceremony, please contact the Committee Chairperson at 475-0706.

Morning Prayer of Kateri

On the trunk of a tree, near a spring where she often came to Fetch water, Kateri carved a cross and prayed in front of it. It is reported that her morning prayer was some what like this:

"Father, Tekakwitha rose at dawn, before the others, to bring you her heart; keep it. Tekakwitha has nothing else to offer you. But she has so much to ask for. Alas! Those of the house do not cease to offend you, they mock the Black Robes, they drink fire water and forbid me to pray. Father, speak to my inner ear; protect me, because I am afraid. You took my mother, give me yours, for I am alone, Father, are you here with me, like the Black Robe says? You hear me?" ■

Joseph B. Guimond, O.M.I.

►
Kateri's tomb
at Côte Ste-Catherine

