
Enshrining Kateri

Shrines are wonderful places. They gather the faithful who desire to pray and honor God in peaceful and determined ways. They are the quiet places that allow a person to sit and meditate on the wonders in the lives of the saint they celebrate. They also invite an insight into personal lives that may be filled with pain and sorrow.

Shrines offer a haven of peace that we all need in our life but they offer a better peace when it is of Jesus. This is the peace and good that forms a real shrine not found in buildings but in the inner spirit of each human being. This peace is truly of God and it can be found enshrined in our hearts and celebrated in our pilgrimage of life.

Kateri Tekakwitha was a young woman who was introduced to Jesus and began to find an inner peace and good. She longed for the love that she began to understand was the story of good that Jesus taught. In that story she began to find her own story coming to life. It was not an easy story for her in a time when the First Nations people were afraid of Christianity. Coupled with this hardship Kateri had to bear a weakness that began with an illness in her younger days.

Both of these difficulties were a kind of cross for her but at the same time that cross became a delight for she really felt that her suffering was an inner light that allowed her to understand the person of Jesus. With this insight the two stories began to merge. For all of us who strive to know Jesus better and allow his goodness into who we are the story is important. As we grow and become more aware of who we are our story becomes more of a mystery and yet more of a marvel. The story of Jesus cannot remain just a story in a book but has to become a way of living the story in a better way.

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As we become more knowledgeable of the God within, we can become a real presence of that God without. Our daily encounter with Christ in prayer and good works brings us closer to God as God wants to be closer to us. This was the spirit of Kateri and it can be ours as well.

The shrines of Kateri Tekakwitha that invite people from all over the globe are places where her story is held sacred. They are places where others have found peace and a renewed spirit in their story.

These places where Kateri rests in spirit invite others to rest with her and come to know her as the person of a deep love of Jesus. Visiting these shrines can offer us a moment of rest and a moment of truth. Being on the same ground that Kateri traveled can in fact lift us up to the creator in new and personal ways.

For some, it is a spot where they can walk and talk with God. For others, it is a place where they feel their personal holiness and are lifted in spirit to be better and more giving of the good they have received. Listening to our story as we listen to Kateri's story, can bring us to hear the Jesus story with better ears. Hearing his story once more can bring us to appreciate our gift of Christianity. When this happens we will know God better and our story will be a mystery of holy good and our world will become a shrine of beauty.

Friar Mark Steed, OFM Cap, *Director of the National Kateri Shrine, Fonda NY*



Photo by Deacon Ron Boyer

Fr. Mark Steed, Director of the Kateri National Shrine in Fonda, NY and Deacon Ron Boyer, Vice-Postulator of Kateri's Cause during the past Thanksgiving Healing Weekend October 8-10th in Fonda NY

Friar Mark Steed is a Canadian Franciscan priest from Toronto and is very attached to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha and a strong promoter of her Cause. The Franciscan did us well with his appointment to Kateri National Shrine in Fonda NY. God bless you, Friar Mark and you can be assured of our Kateri Advisory's full collaboration supporting your work at your Shrine.

Sincerely, Deacon Ron Boyer