

KATERI'S BAPTISM - APRIL 18TH, 1676

At that time, Father James de Lamberville was conducted by Providence to the village of our young Iroquois, Tekakwitha. Tekakwitha did not fail to be present at the instruction and prayers which took place every day in the chapel, but she did not dare disclose the design she had for a long time formed of becoming a Christian...But at length when she least expected it the occasion of her declaring her desire for Baptism presented itself. A wound which she had received in the foot detained her in the village whilst the majority of the women were in the fields gathering the harvest of Indian corn. The missionary had selected this time to go his rounds and instruct at his leisure those who had remained in the cabins. He entered that of Tekakwitha. The good girl on seeing him was not able to restrain her joy. She at once began to open her heart to him, even in the presence of her companions, on the earnest desire she had to be admitted into the fold of the Christians. She disclosed also the obstacles she had been obliged to surmount on the part of her family, and in this first conversation showed courage above the other women. The goodness of her temper, the vivacity of her spirit, her simplicity and candor, caused the missionary to believe that one day she would make great progress in virtue. He therefore applied himself particularly to instruct her in the truths of Christianity, but did not think he ought to yield so soon to her entreaties; for the grace of Baptism should not be accorded to adults..., except with great care and after a long probation. All the winter, therefore, was employed in her instruction and a rigid investigation of her manner of life. Even those who had persecuted her most severely were not backward in giving their testimony to her virtue.



And so he hesitated no longer to grant her Holy Baptism, for which she asked with so much godly earnestness. She received it on Easter Sunday, 1676, and was named Kateri, and it is by that name I shall call her in the rest of this letter...

Father Pierre Cholenec, S.J., 1712.
Kateri's Spiritual Director

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