

The Holy Family and Kateri

Over the main altar of the Holy Family Chapel in the Tuscarora Reservation, Lewiston, N.Y., hangs the painting of the Holy Family as you see on this LILY's front page. From Document X in the POSITIO, the compilation of data on Kateri's life submitted to Rome for the introduction of her cause, we obtain the reason why such a painting is prominent in an Indian Chapel and why we should print it in connection with Venerable Kateri.

Holy Family Influence

"Monseigneur de Laval, first Bishop of Quebec, a prelate full of zeal for his flock, had already established the devotion of the Holy Family in his episcopal city as a very suitable means to sanctify it. It produced a great deal of good in effect among the families, and still does constantly, to the edification of the entire country. From Quebec this devotion spread to other parishes with the same results. From the French it came to the Indians, so that the Father in charge of the mission which is now at the Sault and which had its beginning at the Prairie de la Madeleine, deemed it proper to establish the Confraternity of the Holy Family there, as a good means of maintaining and increasing the fervor of that new church. It was decided, however, only to admit a few of the more fervent people of both sexes, so as to give a higher idea of it and to oblige the members who were honored by such a great grace to respond by the holiness of their lives. In this they did not fail, because the Indians, once they have given themselves to God, are capable of the greatest and the most whole-hearted devotion. The small number of chosen souls upheld its new character by an exemplary piety, some were even so austere that the rest of the village looked upon them with a sort of veneration, and to call a person a saint or a member of the Holy Family was to say one and

the same thing, so that they kept this name afterwards as a special sign in the mission. Katherine, who was still very young, and had only been at the Sault for approximately seven to eight months, was admitted to this small number, to which others were received only at an advanced age and after several years of probation."

Proves to be a Most Worthy Member

"But, as we have already pointed out, her virtue placed her above the rule for the ordinary people of the village, and they, moreover, far from being jealous, generally approved of her election. The members of the Holy Family especially showed their joy, looking upon Katherine as capable of sustaining of herself alone this saintly society by her good example. She was the only one who considered that she herself was unworthy, such humble ideas did she have of herself; but the more she thought of her unworthiness, the more she thought it a duty to work for her perfection, so as not to lower the fervor of the Confraternity, to which she gave a new renown by her own. What is certain is that the memory of her alone was sufficient to inspire for a long time, and continues to inspire the fervor of many others."

The Glory of the Indian Race

Today Kateri can also lead her people to God more than ever. "The Glory of the Indian Race" is the inscription on the bronze statue recently dedicated by the Sioux in South Dakota. While some lament our efforts to have her beatified and canonized, the more she is extolled the more of a moral force she becomes in imparting to her people the real meaning of life. Our Indian brothers and sisters can accomplish much on their own as long as they are inspired, sparked, and motivated by their chiefest boast - Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.