

"The Virtues of Tekakwitha Were Heroic."

- Pope Pius XII

In the Fall '71 LILY the virtues of Tekakwitha as described by Father Chauchetiere S.J. appeared under the above heading. Here are Father Cholenec's reflections as found in "Brief Life of Katherine Tegaskouita, Iroquois Christian," written about 1682. Fr. Cholenec was in charge of Sault Saint Francis Xavier to which Kateri betook herself after escaping from the site of her baptism in Fonda.



"Every morning, winter and summer, she was in our church at four o'clock and often arrived even before the bell which rings every day at that hour. She remained there several hours in succession in prayer, though her tongue played small part in it. Ordinarily she prayed only with eyes and heart — her eyes suffused with tears, and her heart incessantly giving forth ardent signs. Her fervor was no less evident in the confessions which she made every eight days or sometimes oftener. She thought herself the greatest sinner in the world. It was with such sentiments of humility that she made all her confessions.

"The same fervor was especially evident every time she received Holy Communion. She made ready for the great day by extraordinary redoubling of her devotion and afterwards she seemed altogether different, so much was she filled with God and His holy love. All her joy was to think upon Our Lord and to converse familiarly with Him. If sometimes asked, "Katherine, do you love Our Lord?" — it was enough to see her immediately quite overcome. "Ah, my Father! Ah, my Father!" she would say, and she could say no more. It was this burning love which made her renounce marriage, to consecrate her virginity to Our Lord at the age of twenty; and although she suffered many rough attacks from her kindred because of this conduct, which was unparalleled among the Iroquois, she held firm always with an unshakable constancy — surely a very admirable thing in the midst of savages among whom even the most virtuous women look to marriage for a share in a husband's hunting for their subsistence.

"Katherine, who had a regard only for the things of heaven, thought herself happy to be able to lack every-

thing and to be abandoned by everyone in order to be entirely consecrated to her Divine Spouse. She once asked one of our longest converted Christian woman what great and difficult things one could suffer to give testimony of one's love for Our Lord. "I know nothing," the woman answered, "more difficult to bear than fire." That was enough for Katherine, who sought only to testify to her love in some heroic manner. She spent a great part of the following night, while everyone else slept, most painfully burning her feet. She then went to the church to offer to her dear Spouse in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar what she had suffered for love.

"She did not stop at that because she knew well that God never so loved mankind as in giving Himself to them in the mystery of

the Eucharist and on the tree of the Cross. It may be said that Katherine imitated other saints perfectly in these two loves and that after having consecrated her heart to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, she sacrificed her body to the Cross, never to be separated from it. She was so eager for the Cross and for suffering that if she had been allowed to act according to the ardor of her desire she would soon have overwhelmed her body, already inflamed and sickly. She sought only to make it suffer in the sight of Jesus crucified . . . The fine courage she displayed in mortifying herself in so strange a manner made her undertake generously the practice of all other virtues. It would take too long to explain the extent of her patience, her humility, her obedience, her simplicity, her constancy, and her union with God; how great was her devotion to the Blessed Virgin and her Guardian Angel. She excelled so greatly in all virtues, and she has given us such rare examples of them, that it seems as if each one had been her particular virtue, and that she gave herself up to that one specially. It could not happen that so holy a life should not be crowned with an exceptional death, as in fact it was."

The Summer LILY will present Katherine in death and the marvelous circumstances that followed.



1656

1680

Lily of the Mohawks THE VENERABLE KATERI TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE

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