

Three letters were written to Pierre Cholenec, S.J. about the cures attributed to Catherine (Kateri) Tekakwitha at the Parish of Saints-Anges in Lachine (a Montreal suburb) by Pierre Remy, a Sulpician priest.

First letter — March 12, 1696

In the month of March, 1695, Marie Madeleine Fortin, 20 years old, was experiencing a difficult childbirth, as many other women during that year who died in childbirth. Midwives were called, though in vain, because none could help her. Knowing well that the woman would die not long after giving birth, some of her neighbours brought earth from Catherine Tekakwitha's grave, as well as the ashes of her clothing. These they soaked in water, and gave to the dying woman to drink. She promised to pray a novena at Catherine's tomb to show her devotion, and to hold Mass where her body lay in repose. Afterwards the woman asked me to say a Mass in her intention. During the Mass, or not long after, the woman gave birth without excessive pain. I baptized the newborn who, at the very moment that I am writing of this miracle, is in good health, as is the mother, who fulfilled her promise with much gratitude.

In 1684, Madeleine Bougerey, a woman of 32 years, was suffering a loss of blood that continued for several months, and had found no remedy. Her neighbour, Michelle Perrin, suggested that she have recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha. Accordingly, she promised to have a Mass said through her intercession at the church of Saint-François-Xavier au Sault, where Catherine's body lay buried. Shortly afterward, her blood loss was stopped, and she returned to health. She later fulfilled her vow.

In the month of April 1683, Madeleine Moisan, 20 years old, lost her way in the forest. After having walked for half a day through the woods, fields, and marshland, without knowing where she was, she heard in the distance the sound of the falls at Saint-Louis. This sound reminded her of various miracles that she had heard of, performed by God through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha, whose body was buried on the shore of the river. She resolved have recourse to Catherine, promising to offer a Mass in her name. Shortly afterward, she found herself in an open space opposite the falls at Sault-Saint-Louis, very close to the place where she had become lost. The next day, she fulfilled her promise and had a Mass said.

In 1693, the same woman was nursing her baby when she developed a difficulty with her left breast that prevented her from breastfeeding. Having experienced this problem three years earlier, she remembered the painful surgery that she had undergone and the three months she had spent in hospital as a result. She could not bring herself to endure a second operation. She came to me in her anguish. I recommended her to have recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha and to pray the *Our Father* in her honour nine times a day for nine days. At the end of this novena, she was completely healed without ever having taken any medicines.

In February of 1696, the eldest daughter of this same woman, Angélique Colmé, who was 17 years old, developed a sort of mouth cancer and came to me in search of a remedy. I gave her zinc sulphate to gargle with, but it had no effect. By then desperate, her Mother came to see me. I suggested that she have recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha, and that she pray a novena in her name- nine times the *Hail Mary* for nine days. For my part, I promised to keep her daughter in my thoughts every day during the Sacrifice of the Mass so that God might cure her through the intercession of His servant. Again, I gave her zinc sulphate mixed with water, to which I added a pinch of ashes of Catherine Tekakwitha's clothing. She was to gargle with this mixture each night of the novena. After the first three days, her condition had worsened and she was confined to bed. I made a visit to her, and her mouth was in a terrible state and was awful to look upon. I encouraged her to have patience and to keep her faith in God and His servant, Catherine. Gradually, her condition improved, and before the end of the novena she was completely healed.

In 1691, Marie Beauvais, the wife of Master Jean Baptiste Pottier, Royal Notary of Montreal, then aged 22 years, developed gallstones. Along with her husband, she promised to have a Mass said at the Church of Saint-François-Xavier of Sault-Saint-Louis, where Catherine Tekakwitha's body is buried, if indeed the woman was cured by God. A short while later, the woman's wish to be cured was granted. Her husband immediately had a Mass said at the Sault. I took note of what the woman and her husband told me of their miraculous story.

In 1695, Catherine Angélique Montour, a woman of twenty-two years old, after several months of slow fever, feared the worst - that the fever would cause a miscarriage - such as she had suffered the year before, for she was 6 months pregnant. She sent for me to come and hear her confession. I did so, and afterwards I gave her the ashes of the clothing of Catherine Tekakwitha to soak in water and drink for nine days, saying nine times the *Hail Mary* each day, and told her to have a Mass said in Catherine's honour or through her intercession, with the promise that if she recovered her health and had a successful delivery, she would go to offer her devotions at the Church of Saint-Francis-Xavier, at the Sault Saint Louis, where Catherine's bones repose. When the novena was over this woman began to improve, the fever left her and at the end of three months her baby was born, full term. I baptized him, and at the time of this writing, he is in good health.

In July of 1694, Juliette Marie Léger, a woman of thirty-three years old, five or six months pregnant, was troubled with a violent fever during the entire summer. She had taken several remedies without avail. Her neighbours, fearing that she would die, sent for me to hear her confession. I did so. I brought her my reliquary in which there is some earth from the grave of Catherine Tekakwitha and some ashes of her clothing. I put some of this in a little bag, and had her make a vow to go to her tomb, to have a Mass said there, and in the meantime to say the *Hail Mary* nine times a day for nine days, for my part promising also to think of her each day of this novena during the Sacrifice of the Mass. A few days after the novena was finished the fever ceased, she began to feel better, and finally her child was delivered full term. I baptized the child who is well at the time that I am writing. She fulfilled her vow with much devotion.

In 1694, Marguerite Plumereau, then a woman of twenty-two years old, suffered several violent attacks of fever, without any relief from medicine. She had recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha and promised God that if she recovered her health through the merits and intercession of His Servant, she would go to offer her devotions in the church where her body rests. As soon as her vow was made, the fever ceased, and she then went to fulfill her vow.

In the same year, 1694, when fever was very common in Montréal, Marie Roy, then a woman of twenty-five years old, after two months of continual fever which had weakened her body and reduced her to the last extremity, sent to me to come and hear her confession. I did so, and advised her to have recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha, to have confidence in her that she would obtain a cure from God through her intercession, and I gave her in a little bag some earth from her grave to take for nine days in water or broth, and told her to say the *Hail Mary* nine times a day during the novena, while I for my part would think of her during the novena in the Sacrifice of the Mass. I had her promise that if she recovered her health she would go have a Mass said and offer her devotions in the church where Catherine's body is at rest. As soon as the novena was over, the fever ceased. Since then she has been well and has fulfilled her vow.

In 1695, Marie Saint-Cyr, a woman of eighteen years, was unable to deliver her first child after nearly three days in labour. Knowing herself to be in danger, she sent to beg me to say a Mass for her safe delivery. I did so, but I first sent her my reliquary in which there is earth from the grave of Catherine Tekakwitha and some ashes of her clothing. To her sister, Catherine Saint-Cyr, I said that she should hang this reliquary around her neck and should have confidence in the servant of God. As soon as she put the reliquary on her neck, she happily delivered. I baptized her child, who at the time I am writing is well, as is his Mother. Six days afterwards this same woman,

having fallen ill enough to die, sent for me to pray to God for her. I sent her some ashes of the clothing in a little bag, to have her mix with water and drink for nine days, advising her to say the *Hail Mary* nine times every day for nine days, while I should have her in my thoughts each of these nine days during the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass. At the end of the novena she began to feel better and entirely recovered her health.

In 1693, Michelle Garnier, a woman of sixty-four years old, was attacked by a fever that reduced her to pure agony, and sent to ask me to hear her confession. I did so and afterwards gave her some purgative pastes of the clergy, in which I had mixed some earth from the grave of Catherine Tekakwitha, I advised her to have recourse to her. She did so and truly the woman was cured.

In the present year, 1696, in March, I was coming back from my mission. When passing by Fort Cuellerier, Jacques Lantier, a farmer of this fortress, and Catherine Angélique Montour, his wife, told me that their daughter named Catherine, three years old, was dying and that they had offered her to God through the merits and the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha, and begged me to say a Mass for her intention in order to obtain her cure. On that very day their daughter began to be better, and the day after I had said the Mass she was entirely cured.

In 1694, the Iroquois made incursions on this island and the surrounding area during the spring and summer. When there was a drought of more than two months that threatened the parish with the loss of their crops and a famine, the women and the young girls made three novenas in succession to obtain from God, through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha, rain and the preservation of their families, their persons, their animals and their grains. On the second day of the novena it began to rain a little and on the ninth day and for several following there fell an abundance of rain. This revived all the grains that were drying up and dying in the fields. This year was fertile and abundant. Not one person of this parish was taken or killed by the Iroquois, nor were their animals nor their grain damaged by their enemies, whereas in several other places of this island and in the surroundings, they attacked, killed, and carried off a number of people.

I shall finish this account, Reverend Father, with a cure that I would ascribe in a peculiar way to a miracle. It happened this last winter, in December, to François Gauntier de Rané, an officer of the Commandant of the Marine, Commandant for the King of the fort of our Church of the Holy Angels, of Lachine. When he was coming back from Montreal, all in perspiration, he stopped to see me. As soon as he arrived his soldiers came to tell him that one of the boats of the garrison had broken loose. He ran down and jumped into the water to fasten it. At first he was stunned by the cold of the water and then he suffered a severe colic, with dreadful vomiting, so that it was necessary to send to the town for a doctor to cure him. Though the doctor gave him several medicines, yet the trouble increased, and when the nephritic colic closed his intestines, food and remedies could not pass or flow into the lower abdomen. This caused him continual vomiting, with a hiccough that would not stop. When the surgeon lost hope of curing the man, I went to hear his confession, prepare him to receive Extreme Unction, and to resign him to death. After hearing his confession, I advised him to have recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha and to promise God that if it pleased Him to cure him through the merits and intercession of His Servant, he would go to have a Mass said in the Church of Saint-Francis-Xavier, at the Sault-Saint-Louis, where the body of Catherine Tekakwitha lies and that he would there offer his devotions. He begged me to make a novena here in the church and to say three Masses for his intention. I did so. During this time, I had him take water in which I had soaked a little bag with ashes of Catherine's clothing. The surgeon brought him a medicine consisting of a mixture of hyacinth and liquid gold. This, mixed with some of the ashes, relieved him of several large live worms. During the novena he began to feel better and at the end of it he recovered his health perfectly. I must accompany him with his wife and several of my parishioners to go to fulfill his vow, if the weather permits, on the next April 17th, the anniversary day of Catherine Tekakwitha.

There, my Reverend Father, is a brief account of the wonders and the miraculous cures that it has pleased

Our Lord to permit in my parish during sixteen years that I have served it, through the intercession and merits of this Servant of God. I have had a perfect knowledge of them, not only as an eyewitness, but through the faithful report that has often been made to me by my parishioners, men and women named herein above, to whose homes I have gone expressly to inform myself as to what they remember. It is for that reason that I have not been able sooner to send you this account, which I began the 12th of the present month, and which I am finishing only on the 30th day of the month of this present year, 1696, signed by my hand to serve and be available in any time and place.

Rémy, priest (Parish of Saints-Anges) in Lachine.

Second letter - March 24, 1696

Here in brief are accounts of miracles that have come to my knowledge, from which you can select such as to serve your purpose.

In 1681, Rene Fortin, two months old, was seized and attacked for several days by panic fears that made him cry dreadfully day and night, so much so that his face became black and blue. His mother brought him to church, and I said over his head the Gospel of Saint John, and saw that the trouble which threatened to cause his death did not then cease. I advised his mother to make a vow to Catherine Tekakwitha and to pray a novena at her grave. As soon as she had made the vow her child was delivered from his affliction and since then he has never felt another attack.

In 1689, François Joseph Lenoir Rolland, then three years old, was afflicted in the thighs and limbs so that he could neither stand up nor walk. His mother offered him to Catherine Tekakwitha, took him to her tomb, had a Mass said there for her intention, and had a novena prayed there by a Native woman. After the novena the child began to walk, and still walks very well.

In 1694, Jacques Paré, aged seven, was extremely ill and had been eleven days without eating or drinking. I gave him Extreme Unction. Then his father, his mother and I consecrated him to Catherine Tekakwitha, making him swallow water in which I had soaked some earth from her grave and some ashes from her clothing, and as he was about to give up his soul on the feast day of Saint Simon and Saint Jude, his father made a vow that during his life he would have a Mass of thanksgiving said each year on that same day, in the church where Catherine's body lay in repose, if God through the merits and intercession of this His Servant would restore life to his son. That very night the child asked his mother for some corn to eat and since then he has been well. I taught him to read and his father and mother have sent him to Angers, France, to his uncle, who is a priest in the Parish of Plessis, to have him study, according to the uncle's plan of bringing him up for the priesthood.

In 1695, Louis Nepveu, three months old, was quite covered with an eruption or rash of sorts. His mother had no milk to feed him, for only blood came from her breasts. She therefore offered her son to Catherine Tekakwitha, carried him to her grave on the seventeenth of April of that year, the anniversary of her death, had a Mass said in her honour and offered a loaf of bread to be blessed. She made a novena there, laid the child on the tomb and at the end of the novena her milk returned, the eruption ceased and since then the child has always been well, with no return of the condition. What is remarkable about this miraculous cure is that the older child, named Pierre, who is five years old, has always had and still has eruption, which is natural in this family and inherited from father to son up to the seventh year.

In November, 1695, François Dubois came to see me at the rectory, in great trouble, saying his son, named François, thirteen months old, was dying; that with continual convulsions he had vomited all the food they gave

him; and that there was no prospect of curing him. Even the surgeon, who was treating him, had given up the case. The man added that his wife was inconsolable. To console my parishioner I said that I had faith that his son would not die of this disease, if only he and his wife would have recourse with confidence to Catherine Tekakwitha; and after getting him to agree, I took him to our church where at the foot of the altar in which the Blessed Sacrament reposes, I consecrated the child to God through the intercession of His Servant. I wrote a note of consolation to the mother, which I sent her with some ashes of the saint's clothing to soak in a little bag in some water, and to have her child take some for nine days, saying each day of the novena to say nine prayers of the *Hail Mary*, while for my part I would remember him each day of the novena at the Sacrifice of the Mass, through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. That very night the child asked for something to eat; he did not vomit again, his convulsions ceased, and, as I myself have seen, since then he has been very well.

In 1696, Charles Cardinal, one year old, was covered with a bodily eruption. The mother sent to ask the surgeon for some ointment to rub on him. He sent her some having mercury in it, with emphatic directions to put it on his wrists and knees. Without thinking of this advice, the mother rubbed it all over the child. The mercury penetrated to vital parts and caused congestion of the brain, thus sending the child into continual convulsions. As they expected his death, I went when summoned to say the prayers prescribed by the Roman Ritual for the sick, after which his mother and I consecrated him to God through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. She promised God to say nine prayers of the *Hail Mary* a day during the nine days, and I to offer her child to God during the nine days at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Then we made him take a pinch of orvietan in which I had dipped, in a little bag, some ashes of the clothing and earth from the grave of the Servant of God, and on that very day the child vomited a large live worm, and since then not only is he well, but he was cured immediately of his eruption, much to the surprise of his mother, who has told me several times and assured me before and after the cure that she had obtained everything she had asked of God through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. The testimony of this woman is so much the more credible, as she has always lived a Christian life. There are still several miracles, which have been performed in this family.

Continuation of the miracles performed in the family of Pierre Cardinal and Marie Matour, his wife. In 1692, Marie Matour, then twenty-two years old, suffered for two years without relief from a condition following confinement. She had recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha to obtain a cure and promised God that if through her merits and intercession she should obtain a cure, she would go and have a Mass said in the Church of Saint-Francis-Xavier, where Catherine is entombed, and that she would there offer her devotions. She was cured in a short time without taking any remedy. Then Marie, her husband, and I went to fulfill the vow in this church. There Marie had a Mass said by one of the Fathers, and I said the Mass which her husband had promised and vowed, for his own escape from a grave illness, during which he had recourse to the Servant of God to obtain a cure.

In 1694, their daughter, named Marie, then five years old, was ill with scrofula of the throat, which produced swelling. Her mother had taken her to Montréal where she had her treated several days by the surgeons, but without any relief. She finally had recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha and promised God to take her child to her tomb. This she did, had a Mass said, and had a novena prayed, after which the child was entirely cured of the scrofula, though it is a disease incurable in this country.

This very year, 1696, in the month of February, their son, Jean, aged five, had swallowed a piece of straw or a bit of wheat, which was suffocating him. His mother had him take some water in which she dipped ashes of the clothing of Catherine Tekakwitha. This made the bit of wheat pass on and be swallowed, although his mother had already used every effort to take it from his throat without success.

In 1694 the same woman had a cow which was swelling up before her eyes and which was in danger of

bursting. Since this would have caused considerable loss to the poor family, she had recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha to obtain from God through her mediation, the cure of the animal, and had me say a Mass for this intention. As soon as she made this promise the swelling was reduced and so the animal was saved.

Around August 1695, Louis Fortier, aged thirteen, developed an incurable disease. After his father and mother and I had given several remedies that did him no good, we sent him to the hospital in Montréal. He was treated there by the doctors and surgeons, but in vain. His mother came to tell me with tears in her eyes that the medical men despaired of his cure, and begged me to say a Mass to obtain from God the cure of her son through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. This I did willingly, after which the remedies were effective and he passed a quantity of green undigested fruits; plums, mulberries and thorn apples, which through their quantity, their solidity, and their indigestion had caused the mortal malady. Since then he has been well.

In 1684, Lambert Cuellerier, two years old, being but skin and bones, was scarcely able to take any nourishment. When very near to death, his father and mother took the child to the church of Saint-Francis-Xavier, where the bones of Catherine Tekakwitha rest. They placed him on her tomb, had a Mass said there and had a novena prayed to obtain from God the cure of their son through the merits of His Servant. As soon as the novena was finished the child began to feel better and since then he has been, as he still is, in perfect health.

In 1690, Joseph Cuellerier, twelve years old, fell ill and suffered from a languor, as if attacked by tuberculosis which had reduced him to his last extremity. His father went to the Jesuit Fathers for some ashes of the clothing of Catherine Tekakwitha. He made his son drink water in which these ashes were soaked, and by this means his son was cured. Since then he has been well.

In 1688, Barbe Brunet, aged thirteen, had been ill for two months of the tertian fever, which had gone into the double tertian. No remedy was found to reduce the fever, which had emaciated her until she was like a skeleton. Thus unable neither to stand up, nor take remedies and food, she was ready to die, and was given up by the doctor. Then she was told to have recourse to Catherine Tekakwitha. In fact she promised to have a novena prayed at the tomb and to go there to offer her devotions. Two days later she began to feel better, her fever left her and she recovered her health. She kept her vow.

In 1694, Francois Roy, aged seventeen, sent for me to give him the Last Sacraments. He had been attacked for three weeks or a month previously by a fever, which had reduced him to the last extremity. Remedies were of no avail. I made him promise to pray a novena to Catherine Tekakwitha, which he was to say for nine days or have his mother say nine prayers of the *Hail Mary*, while I should offer the Sacrifice of the Mass on the same nine days. During the novena I had him take water in which I had dipped a little bag in which I had put earth from the grave and ashes from the clothing of Catherine Tekakwitha. Seven days after this novena the fever left him and he has not since been ill.

Thus far are written in this memoir the miracles and cures which have been effected in this parish during nine or ten years, through the merits and intercession of our protectress and advocate before God, Catherine Tekakwitha, both to my benefit and to the benefit of the children of my parish. I have perfect knowledge of these things, for I was the promoter and eyewitness. In testimony whereof I have signed this 24 March 1696.

Rémy, priest (Parish of Saints-Anges) in Lachine.

Third letter - March 30, 1696

In 1688, a small number of villagers left for the island of Montréal. When the harvest was well underway, the

Iroquois started to revolt and killed seven men on their first attack. Madeleine Bougerey and her eldest daughter, Marie Bosne, the widow of Pierre Montpetit, made a promise to God that if, through the intercession and the merits of Catherine Tekakwitha the house and crops of Marie and her late husband were saved from the fires started by the Iroquois, they would have a Mass held in her honour. A wonderful thing happened! Almost all of the houses in the area were burned except this and one other house where I had held a Mass when I had first arrived on my mission. All of the crops had burned except for those mentioned, of peas. Though the Iroquois had attempted to burn them, only the surface had been damaged. Jacques Charles, Madeleine's husband, who helped harvest said crops of peas, is witness to this miracle.

The 28 October 1694, Marguerite Picard, thirty-three years old and seven months pregnant was injured when a stable door fell on her back. She became afraid that she would go into premature labour. She sent for Anne Matteau, one of the women of the parish. Upon her visit, Anne became aware that the baby had been displaced in the womb. Realizing that the woman was in great danger of losing her baby, or going into labour too early, Anne suggested that the woman consecrate her unborn child to Catherine Tekakwitha. She did so. She promised to have a Mass said and to pray a novena, saying the *Hail Mary* every day for nine days, and to drink water that had been mixed with earth from Catherine's grave and the ashes of her clothes. Two days later, the baby returned to the proper position in her womb, and she gave birth two months later, full term. The mother of this woman, as well as the woman herself, recounted this miracle to me.

In 1684, Catherine Godin, a woman of 25 years, fell ill with a blood loss that lasted three months and seemed incurable by any of the remedies prescribed to her at the Montréal hospital, where she was being treated. She had no choice after two months of failed treatment but to leave the hospital. Upon her return, she went to visit a Jesuit priest at the Saint-François-Xavier of the Sault mission in Lachine, near her home, to whom she confided her troubles. The priest spoke to her of a young woman named Catherine Tekakwitha, who died a saint, and whose grave was a site of healing where invalids were known to be made well. He proposed that she have a novena prayed by one of the indigenous women of the mission. She did so. She prayed to God that he take care of her and make her well. At the end of the novena, this woman who suffered for three months with blood loss found herself perfectly healed.

In 1693, André Merlot, 53 years old, suffered swelling of the eyes. He risked losing his vision, and already had difficulty seeing objects in his surroundings. I therefore had him pray a novena to Catherine Tekakwitha, saying the *Hail Mary* every day for nine days, and I offered Mass on these nine days through the intercession of Catherine Tekakwitha. I also proposed that he rub his eyes with a little water that I had mixed with the earth from the grave of Catherine Tekakwitha and the ashes of her clothes on each day of the novena. At the end of the novena, he was in perfect health. The inflammation has been gone since, nor has he felt any pain in his eyes. This I have witnessed and can confirm.

Rémy, priest (Parish of Saints-Anges) in Lachine.