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MAY

### Tekakwitha's Baptism of Desire

Tekakwitha abhorred the cruelty with which the braves of her village tortured and burned to death their captive victims, even though this was done under the pretext of sacrifice in order to propitiate their god, Aireskoi, and win victory over General Tracy and his warriors. She avoided such scenes, in which her people, old and young, participated and revelled. Later in life she would inflict on her fragile body rigorous penances in order to expiate the demoniacal barbarity of her tribesmen.

The girl could not, however, fail to observe the futility of the sacrifice to their war god in contrast with the triumph of the French, and start with a new emotion as she heard the chanting of their thanksgiving and *Te Deum*. Soon after she saw for the first time the cross which they had planted near the embers of the sacrificial fire to Aireskoi. On her way back to the site of her village now in ruins, she would again behold the cross which was erected at Audagaron, as the Tracy army marched down the Valley on the eve of the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Isaac Jogues.

Though only ten years old, Tekakwitha had been favored in many ways by Divine Providence: the protection and privacy of her uncle's cabin, the example and care of her mother's Christian friend, Tegonhatsihongo, and of other Christian captives. Now these were to become more frequent and, in some instances, to be exterior graces which at length would lead up to the re-

ception of the inward grace by which she would become sanctified. More and more, in the way of children, she would ask questions, seek to know the meaning of the cross, and the crucifix, and learn to know what suffering is with winter coming on and her people without cabins, sufficient clothing, or provisions. Then she would see the missionaries, or Black Robes, as they were entertained in her uncle's cabin, the Jesuits Fremin, Bruyas and Pierron, who came by agreement with the Mohawks in 1667.

The presence of a priest may be an external grace, but in addition Tekakwitha would observe their manners, see them at their devotions in prayer and reading the Divine Office, notice their crucifixes, their gentleness and modesty, their refined speech, courtesy, untiring zeal as they kept constantly going from one village to another to strengthen the Christian captives and recover the straying sheep. All that was a revelation to the child coming now at last to appreciate the Christian way of life in which her Algonquin mother had shared at Three Rivers before her captivity.

Now that the Christian captives could practise religion more freely—they were at least eighty in number, one-fifth of the village—it was still like another external grace to observe their eagerness to meet for prayer and instruction, and to hear them discussing what they would learn and what they prayed for. Gradually Kateri would thus begin to discern the gulf between the superstitions,

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idolatry and moral degradation of her own people and the closer faith, the devout worship, the charity, and the finer mode of life of those who had embraced the Prayer. They were living and doing things which human nature left to itself could not know or attempt to do without inspiration and support from a higher power. Her Iroquois braves considered themselves supermen, but how woefully incapable they seemed of a supernatural life!

As the young maiden grew in age and in wisdom, so she was in due time to be reborn into the life of interior grace, and grow in it. The missionaries were attracted by her disposition and reverend manner, and no doubt they treated her encouragingly. They would learn that she had a Christian mother, but also that she had not yet been baptized. Meantime their time and labor must be given to those who were already Christian. On these they could depend to attract others to the Faith. What labor this meant, it is well nigh impossible for us to appreciate.

The Indian of that day, fickle by nature, was the victim of tribal traditions and customs which became for him a second nature.

To these were added prejudices imprinted in his mind by his otherwise good-natured Dutch neighbors. Sorcerers and medicine men were in control, and, like Simon Magus, they would, if they could, deceive the priests, pretend conversion in order to learn the secrets of the witchcraft, as they considered it, of the Sacraments and various Christian practises. Prudently, the Fathers kept their candidates for baptism two and three years or more under instruction and trial. Just as in the early days of the Church, it took time to cast out the old leaven of paganism and train the catechumen patiently, as was done even with the great St. Ambrose, so, too, the human nature of the Indian had to be newly leavened before it could be supernaturalized. The language had to be mastered, chapels built, catechists formed, the truths set to music in which the Indians delighted. Meantime, Tekakwitha was favored by Divine Providence with exterior graces and she was ever faithful to them. In the burning of her village she had gone through a material baptism by fire: she would soon begin to have baptism by desire, before receiving it "of water and the Holy Ghost." (John 3, 5.)

### In the Court of Holiness — VII

Why does it take so long to have a Servant of God declared Blessed or Saint? This is frequently asked and the answer serves to show how sure the declaration is when it is finally made. There are all sorts of reasons or causes for the time taken, some of them extrinsic to the case in question and others intrinsic or inherent in it.

Extrinsic in the case of Tekakwitha was its very strangeness. It seemed incredible that a young person could grow up in the surroundings in which she had to live and retain the purity of her soul unsullied. Even her spiritual directors, the saintly missionaries Lamberville, Cholenec, Chauchetiere,

who believed in her holiness, hesitated to write about her until they were convinced that she was the medium of extraordinary heavenly favors for those who invoked her aid. The rude conditions of missionary life; uncertainty about ecclesiastical jurisdiction in New France; difficulty in communicating with those who in France or in Rome might have furthered the case, or cause, as we term it; the preoccupation of the missionaries with their laborious work; the political change which wrested the government of New France from France to England; the suppression of the Society of Jesus, to which the missionaries belonged; the difficulty of

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re-establishing it and of recovering the documents on which the case must rest—these are only some of the extrinsic reasons for the delay in this case.

Next came the labor of preparing for submission of the case to the court of first instance, Albany, since she had lived most of her life in the territory of that diocese; the serious illness of two who were principally concerned in the process conducted by that court; and after the cause was presented in Rome the deaths of the two Cardinals, Ceretti and Sincero, who successively were designated as its proponents; the death also of Dom Quentin, O.S.B., head of the historical section of the Congregation of Rites, who was considering the Cause in precedence before many others.

Once the Cause was submitted to the officials of the Congregation of Rites, it moved quickly, as one may judge by the fact that when it was presented there were already over 600 Causes in various stages, engaging the attention of the Congregation. Still intrinsic in this as in every Cause for the beatification of a Servant of God is the time it takes to examine the observance of the

canonical procedure by the court of the first instance; to copy the testimony of the witnesses and the documents; to study and weigh their value; to prepare a summary, or brief, for the consultors of the Congregation and then to have all this printed by the Vatican Press in the bulky volume it requires.

The latest word from the Postulator in Rome is to this effect: The summary of the Cause, i.e., of the testimony, documents and findings of the Historical Section of the Congregation of Rites is now in the Vatican Press and the head of this section, Father Antonelli, assures him the Consultors of the Congregation will receive and pass on it before the summer vacation. The next step will be its formal introduction with the sanction of the Holy Father.

It takes time and patience, but it is for all eternity and, therefore, well worth while.

Now that the Cause of our Lily is nearing a decisive stage, we are calling on her clients to help us when and so far as they can conveniently to meet the expense which it requires. They never fail us and they well know she never fails them.

### Month to Month

#### A NOBLE THANKS OFFERING

"Dear Father: You will be pleased to hear that *White Wampum* was plated recently for the blind and twenty-five copies have been sent to libraries in America, Ireland, England, France, China and other places.

"This was just another of the thanksgiving gifts, made by my mother, \_\_\_\_\_, to Tekakwitha through whose intercession she recovered from pneumonia four years ago."—SISTER VICTORIA, Covington.

(*White Wampum* is an exquisite story of Tekakwitha. Kateri knew what it was to suffer affliction of the eyes.—ED.)

she decided to commit suicide—her son watched her day and night and of course wrote to his aunt, to whom I gave the leaflet. Well, she started to pray to the Lily of the Mohawks for her sister. Someone advised to see a specialist in New York and he positively assured her the sight could be saved and it was. She asked for a priest and her husband and son both have become Catholics." —Philadelphia.

It is becoming a practice to observe the anniversary of Kateri's death, April 17. Soon let us hope we shall be observing it as her Feast.

#### HOW SOME PRAYERS ARE HEARD

"Father: I gave a leaflet to a friend whose sister had left the Church over twenty years—married and has one son about seventeen years old. When a child she lost sight of one eye; the other eye was pronounced positively hopeless and when she heard this

Have any of the devotees of Tekakwitha thought of praying for the awakening of the lady who has been six long years in a somnolent condition? Recently a relic of the Indian maiden was sent to a priest in her neighborhood.



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## THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF TEKAKWITHA

When reporting favors attributed to the intercession of Tekakwitha, many send offerings of money to help forward the Cause for her Beatification. We do not mention the offering because this is forbidden by Canon 1261 in the Code of Canon Law.

Frequently also cures and other favors are reported as miraculous. In such cases we do not repeat this, but we request the writers to obtain, if possible, the diagnosis of the physician and his opinion on the seriousness of the illness, not on its miraculous appearance.

"Asked for \$5.00 to pay bills and received \$565."  
—New York.

"My prayer finally was answered when I received a wonderful position, better than I ever had in my life."  
—Philadelphia.

"The recovery of a Benedictine student from an illness which doctor and attendants considered fatal."  
—Saint Bernard, Ala.

"The unexpected donation of quite a liberal sum of money—in fact, the exact amount needed to make up the purchase price for an estate we were anxious to acquire."  
—Baltimore.

"Some weeks ago I was in need of financial assistance. To my surprise, I received the desired assistance, more than needed, thanks to the dear Lord and His servant Kateri."  
—Pastor, Glad Valley, S. D.

"... since my prayers to the little maiden I have recovered. Either my doctor was mistaken in diagnosing my case as cancer, or something marvelous has occurred."  
—San Antonio.

"... A large sum of money was owing to the Convent for two years. I promised Catherine Tekakwitha a statue for our little chapel if I would get the amount in full the next day. It seemed a bold request. However, before noon the next day, I had a cheque for the full amount, nearly \$1,200 ..."  
—Toronto, Canada.

"About five years ago I had a relapse. This the doctors believed was the result of a train wreck I was in about fourteen years ago. Convulsions one after the other came and deliriousness for days. I was in the hospital for over three weeks—the doctors from all over gave me up, even the best specialists. Finally, Sister Callista, C.S.A., told my mother about this little Saint. They started a novena to her and on the ninth day I turned for the better. The doctors and sisters were amazed and regard it as marvelous."  
—Campbellsport, Wis.

"... I am a Navajo Indian and for the past year have had a very bad sore on my leg which would heal a little, then always open again. No matter what the Sisters used on it, it would not heal and even spread further on the leg. It was draining so much that every day I had to have it dressed. Finally one of the Sisters here at the Mission said now we will trust you and the cure of your leg to dear Kateri, so each day the relic that you sent them, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, they applied to the sore and we said the prayer in honor of Catherine. From the very first time the leg began to get better and then it healed altogether. For many months now it has never reopened, it is entirely healed and all signs of the sore are gone. I am so happy and thankful to Catherine, for it surely was her who helped it."  
—St. Michaels, Ariz.

"When I was in Rome last summer Kateri Tekakwitha and Pope Pius X granted me a wonderful favor which I call a miracle. I have had phlebitis in my ankle and limb for eighteen years. It would swell and was discolored and I was rarely without pain at any time, but at intervals it was so very painful and bad that I would have to go to bed for weeks at a time, the danger being all these years that if the clot or even a part of it would get into the blood-stream I would die instantly.

"So when I arrived at Rome for the ordination of my son last summer I wondered how long I could keep on my feet after seeing the cobblestone streets, hills, stone stairs and floors, up and down buses, etc. I implored Tekakwitha and Pope Pius X for relief while I was abroad. I did not ask for a cure. In my joy of seeing my son I did not realize what was happening or had happened to me until the third day, when I saw to my surprise and amazement the inflammation had gone out of it and also the swelling. I have not had a pain in it since my return in September."  
—Minneapolis, Minn.

### ADDITIONAL FAVORS RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF TEKAKWITHA

Cures .....	16	Relief in Distress ..	5
Positions Obtained ..	8	Spiritual Aid .....	2
Financial Aid .....	19	Not Specified .....	45

### Make Tekakwitha Known

**Life**, by Wynne, 64 pages, 3 illustrations. .25c. a copy; 5 for \$1.00; discount on quantities

**Leaflets**—I, cures—II, money aid, employment, etc.—III, Novena. .5c. each; 25c. a doz.

IV—Special for Priests and Communities

**Pictures**, colored. . . . . 5 x 3 in., each 5c.; 10 x 13½ in., each 40c.; discount on quantities

**Medals** . . . . . Oxidized silver, 15c.; \$1.50 a doz.; aluminum, 50c. a doz.

**The Lily of the Mohawks**, Monthly Message. . . . . Subscribe at 60c. a year; 2 copies, \$1.00

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