

THE LILY OF

*Fairest flower that ever*



THE MOHAWKS

*bloomed among true men*

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## GIVE THANKS TO GOD WITHOUT CEASING

ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS, 2. 13.

This monthly message of the Lily of the Mohawks tells by far the most important news about the Cause for her beatification we have yet had to publish. The historical investigation of the documents on which this Cause depends has been concluded, and the conclusion is most favorable. Unanimously the investigators have reported that the documents are entirely satisfactory and provide sufficient evidence for proving that Tekakwitha's virtue was heroic, so that the Holy Father may now sanction the formal Introduction of the Cause.

All concerned—and who is not?—should thank God profoundly and beg of Him that the Cause may now proceed speedily to a happy termination.

On July 5 the Vice-Postulator for the Cause for the beatification and canonization of Catherine Tekakwitha received his copy of the "*Positio*" of the historical Section of the Congregation of Rites on the formal Introduction of this Cause, and on the virtues of this Servant of God.

"*Positio*" is Latin for position, report, stand, conclusion, decision. The Congregation of Rites is composed of Cardinals, about twenty in number, who safeguard the rites and ceremonies of the Church and preside over the processes for beatification and canonization. The historical Section is the group or committee of the Congregation dealing with causes for beatification of persons who died so long ago that there are no longer any eye-witnesses of their life, virtues, or of their reputation for holiness, and miraculous intervention.

Introduction of a cause means that after diligent investigation by the proper section

of the Congregation of Rites, the Supreme Pontiff, assured that there is firm foundation for believing in the holiness of the Servant of God in question, issues a decree authorizing the Congregation to proceed with the cause, to investigate if the virtues were practised to a heroic degree and to examine the alleged miracles in the case.

The "*Positio*" makes a stately volume of 500 pages quarto, handsomely printed. It is a marvel of historical study. It is the fruit of nearly six years' labor.

Long as six years may be, it seems brief when one considers the contents of this volume and the circumstances in which it was produced. A few years after it was presented to the Congregation of Rites, the head of the historical Section died suddenly, but this caused little delay in the difficult task. How difficult it was and how thorough the accomplishment may be to some extent appreciated by a survey of the contents of this volume.

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## THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS

Imagine a child of the forest as the subject of all this research and learning. For all time this volume will be the treasure-trove of information about the Lily of the Mohawks, a great library in miniature, the summation of nearly three centuries of labor by writers, collectors, librarians, archivists. It is in Italian, French and Latin. Would that some devotee or devotees of Tekakwitha would enable us to reproduce it in English!

At the head of the volume is the familiar portrait of Tekakwitha which was painted by one of her spiritual directors, Father Claude Chauchetière. She is the only one of her race of whom we have an authentic picture.

Father Antonelli, of the Friars Minor, head of the historical Section, prefaces the volume with a statement telling briefly who Tekakwitha is, "a genuine redskin," the first of her ill-treated race to be a candidate for the honors of the altar.

He explains why Kateri did not receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, and also why her Cause could not have been instituted before this, and dwells on the fact that the principal documents in the case are the writings of three eye-witnesses, who were intimately acquainted with her life.

Tekakwitha has a distinction of having every element in the Church, the hierarchy, the secular clergy, members of religious communities and the laity concerned in her Cause. The Ursulines and Sisters of the Precious Blood, Quebec, did much to preserve the documents; the Sulpician, Remy, left valuable testimony to her miracles. The Bishop of Albany instituted the Cause; the Archbishop of Ottawa, an Oblate, was a witness; the Albany tribunal was composed of secular priests; among the witnesses were Jesuits and a Religious of the Society of the

Sacred Heart. One of the reputed miracles submitted occurred to a Paulist; Postulator and Vice-Postulator are Jesuits, but at one time a secular priest was Postulator. A Benedictine was the first to study the Cause, as head of the historical Section of the Congregation of Rites; dying suddenly, he is followed by a Franciscan, and a Redemptorist prepared the Summary of her life, virtues and reputation for holiness. And now the Cause goes to Cardinals, and next to the Pope.

Credit is given to Father Felix Martin for having collected most of the documents in the case and to Reuben Gold Thwaites for having published many in his remarkable compilation of *The Jesuit Relations* in 73 volumes. As Father Antonelli remarks, these researches greatly facilitated the work of the historical Section. Without naming anyone, he mentions the more recent investigation prior to the Process on Albany, in which the Vice-Postulator was greatly aided by Father Arthur Melancon, who is archivist of the famous Jesuit collection of documents in Montreal.

Concluding his work, Father Antonelli inquires:

1. Are the documents sufficiently complete?
2. Are they genuine and trustworthy?
3. Do they prove repute for holiness?
4. Was this repute spontaneous or artificial?
5. Are the documents a solid basis for declaring Tekakwitha's virtues heroic?

To all these questions his answer is, Yes.

He then submits the entire matter to the Consultors of the historical Section, 18 in number. This was early in June. After a study of his "*Positio*," by mid-July they agreed with him unanimously.

On July 16 Monsignor Vagnozzi presented to the Holy Father the Indian petitions for the beatification of Catherine Tekakwitha. The following day His Holiness mentioned the Indian Maiden in his radio message to the Eucharistic Congress in Quebec.