

THE LILY OF

Fairest flower that ever



THE MOHAWKS

bloomed among true men

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DEATH-DAY IS A BIRTHDAY

The ways of God are not the ways of men and it is no surprise that the Church follows the ways of God. Men mourn at the death of a loved one, but the Spouse of Christ, His Church, rejoices on the death-day of her chosen children because for them the hour of their death on earth is the hour of their birth in heaven.

On April 17, 1680, Kateri Tekakwitha, a truly all-American Catholic girl, departed this life, and, as we piously believe, entered the life of eternal bliss. The missionaries treated her when dying, as they had always done, as one of God's elect, and signs, are, ever since, that they were not wrong. On January 3, 1943, the Cardinals of the Congregation of Rites met with His Holiness Pius XII, now gloriously reigning, to listen to their Secretary read the Decree declaring that the Servant of God, Kateri Tekakwitha, was virtuous to an heroic degree and that she might therefore be considered Venerable. Since that day new signs have not been wanting to show that the Venerable Servant of God is making every effort to co-operate with her clients.

On her birthday, April 17, let us beg God that Kateri's Cause may continue to advance to His honor and glory, and let us storm heaven with our petitions, particularly those which seek a physical cure. Our Lord will not be unmindful of our pleas and in His own good providence, will hasten the day when Kateri's death-day, her heavenly birthday, may become her Feast Day. All her clients will surely join us here at the Tekakwitha League in saluting the marvelous maid of Auriesville — "Happy Birthday, Kateri!"

THE MARVELOUS MAID OF AURIESVILLE*

By RICARDO FERNANDEZ, S.J.

(Continued)

Lily of the Mohawks

Apart from her sinlessness, attested to by every known witness, Katharine's life for some years was typical of the member of a race dedicated to mere subsistence. Indian culture was scant. Food and shelter were the main concerns of life. She hewed wood, drew water, tended the fire. She worked daintily in pigskin and deerskin. She knew how to extract

*Note: This story is published—Courtesy of the *The Pilgrim*, The Voice of Ossernenon (now Auriesville, N. Y.), where Kateri was born.

red dye from the glue of sturgeons. She made boxes, wove baskets and buckets, cut poles for stacking corn.

This picture of Indian domestic pursuits may sound Pocahontaslike, romantic, idyllic. But we must remember the sober facts about the savages who were Katharine's people. These crafts were not practiced as hobbies. They played a necessary part in the struggle for food and drink on the part of cruel, warlike barbarians. Most of the men, women and children with whom Katharine lived were morally dissolute. The missionaries who lived and died for these people bear unanimous testimony to their continued and open depravity.

The title for this story was not selected without cause. It was deliberately chosen to emphasize the wondrous story of God's grace on the soul of an Indian girl who for twenty years enjoyed only Baptism of desire. Grace, tempering the steely fiber of Katharine's soul, pounded by fierce trials, is the only explanation for the miracle of God's special love which is the story of her life. There is no natural explanation.

Katharine's love of work and solitude were powerful natural safeguards to her virtue. She could always busy herself among a lazy people. She liked to be alone. There is no better way of avoiding temptations and repugnant encounters.

As the dull, work-filled years dragged on several coarse attempts were made to trap her into an unwanted marriage. Katharine foiled each attempt by shrewdly timed flight. This is a familiar device among holy people who place their confidence in God rather than in themselves.

Strong-willed with her aunts only on this one point, and wholly obedient to them in all else, she gradually won the affection of her bewildered relatives. But for years, though we write it off in a few sentences, she was thoroughly bedevilled in the Mohawk lodges by sordid savages who were completely at a loss to understand her extraordinary attitude. Her character was sweet but strong. She had little will of her own except against sin.

Up to this point in her life Katharine had never met a missionary. Ten years before she was born her tribesmen at Ossernenon had done to death three Jesuit martyrs: Saints Isaac Jogues, Rene Goupil and John Lalande. Jesuits slain for Christ on the field of honor have a way of attracting their fellows to the same spots. Wise though he be, Lucifer displays sorry strategy here.

Enter the Blackrobes

Thus in 1667 three more Jesuit missionaries appeared on the scene with that cool recklessness so taken for granted among themselves. They were hard on the heels of De Tracy's invasion of the Mohawk strongholds. This punitive expedition, as thorough as fire and the sword could make it, led the chastened Mohawks to sue for peace and, as its token, missionaries.

In the newly established village of Gandaouaghé (now Fonda, four miles west of Auriesville) the missionaries were housed for a short time by Tekakwitha's uncle. Here again Onsigongo's action was not quite what it seemed. With his ward-boss instincts he entertained the missionaries as pledges of a peace the decimated Mohawks were only too anxious to enjoy. They had been soundly drubbed and their bellicosity had temporarily disappeared.

This initial visit lasted but three days. Its brevity had been laconically explained in the documents. It seems that the bulk of the tribe were having a protracted bout with the whiskey unwisely provided them by the purposeful Dutch at nearby Albany. This practice

was comparable to handing a blowtorch to a baby. While most of the tribe was indisposed, Katharine, in her capacity as eleven-year-old maidservant to the Fathers, had ample opportunity, for all her timidity, to be wondrously edified.

Only thy Grace

Marvelous natural virtue and the graces conferred by Baptism of desire had carried her sinless through a stormy eleven years. Her formal religious education had been extremely sketchy. Now for three golden days she could observe holy priests at their prayers before the Crucifix, celebrating Mass, reading their breviaries, saying their beads. Had their stay been longer she would surely have asked for Baptism. God's time for this had not yet come. But Katharine's resolve to become a Catholic and remain a virgin was firmly sealed in her heart.

It was not long before her family made another assault to change her mind about marriage. The preparations were complete. A Mohawk brave, whose family had agreed with Katharine's relatives to the match, arrived at the lodge and seated himself beside her. If she offered him food and remained in her place, according to Indian custom they would have been man and wife. It took her but a moment to realize her plight. She made no move. There was no troth, and the prospective groom went away.

This incident was the signal for a storm of petty but bitter persecution. The lodge had lost a provider. Katharine was called unmannerly, uncouth, traitorous to Indian tradition. Because of her Algonquin blood her decision was misinterpreted as mere distaste for a Mohawk alliance. She was treated as a slave in her own lodge.

All these trials Katharine bore with an evenness of temperament and a sweetness of temperament and a sweetness of disposition that gradually won back the affections of her tormentors. Only once more in her life would the question of marriage arise. The Indians were beginning to comprehend the treasure they possessed. Tekakwitha—"who moveth all before her," was growing in spiritual stature.

(To be continued)

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

A FRIEND IN NEED

"Just about a year ago I received the first copy of THE LILY OF THE MOHAWKS; a friend of mine subscribed for me. Just at that time my financial worries were getting the best of me and although I had no special prayer on hand I just hoped that somehow or other my new friend, Venerable Kateri, was going to help me and pay my debts. Shortly after that I received some money that I never expected and, besides, my husband started to work more hours and that increased the pay check. Then and there I promised to help Kateri's Canonization Cause as thanksgiving for the favors received." —Buffalo, N. Y.

A GRATEFUL CLIENT

"I am sending you the relic of little Tekakwitha that you so kindly loaned me. All I can say is my breast is better, the pain is gone along with the swelling. I have given out hundreds of pamphlets to my customers to further devotion to the little Indian virgin, and shall continue to. She never fails me. Enclosing a small check."

—Cambridge, Mass.

A REAL FAVOR

"I am enclosing a small offering in thanksgiving for a favor granted after praying to the Venerable Tekakwitha. X-rays taken late in November showed a definite constrict-

tion of the colon. X-rays taken March 5 showed an entirely normal condition — a remarkable recovery.” —Buffalo, N. Y.

“I promised Kateri Tekakwitha if a very dear friend of mine would be spared to her two adopted little children and live to be with them again, I would send a small offering. She had a stroke, but thanks to Kateri she is coming along fine.”

—Binghamton, N. Y.

“Enclosed is an offering I promised if our baby would be a normal healthy child. Our daughter was born February 4, normal and healthy. Whenever we need help we pray to the Lily of the Mohawks and she always helps us.”

—Green Bay, Wis.

“I have a lot of work for Kateri to do. She has been helping us with eye difficulties, lame knees, errant brothers, and dwindling health, and we still need her generous assistance.”

—San Francisco, Cal.

“Enclosed find check for the Cause of Canonization for Katherine, in thanksgiving for guidance given in treating a stubborn skin condition.”

—Buffalo, N. Y.

“Enclosed find offering for Catherine Tekakwitha's Cabin as a thanksgiving for a big favor received — a marriage righted after thirty-one years.”

—San Jose, Cal.

“This offering is in thanksgiving for the fifteen postulants admitted into our Seattle novitiate during the year 1948.”

—Seattle, Wash.

“Enclosed find small donation for past favors received, and for being able to keep out of debt as my husband has only the old-age pension.”

—Chicago, Ill.

“Enclosed find my Christmas offering. Tekakwitha to me is a Saint already. She has done things for me that were most unbelievable.”

—Little Marais, Minn.

“In recognition of Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha's help in both spiritual and financial matters, I am sending a small offering.”

—Manitoba, Canada.

“My husband and I both say the novena and have received a lot of financial aid through her intercession.”—Rochester, N. Y.

“The enclosed offering is in thanksgiving to Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha for a very special favor.”

—New York, N. Y.

ADDITIONAL FAVORS

Cures	3	Relief in Distress	6
Financial Aid	5	Not Specified	40

PETITIONS

Cures	10	Apartments	4
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Obituary

Mrs. L. Flynn, Carbondale, Pa.

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TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE

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