

THE LILY OF

Fairest flower that ever



THE MOHAWKS

bloomed among true men

Vol. XVI, No. 2

MARCH-APRIL, 1952

EASTER IN THE WILDWOOD

It was Easter, 1676. Outside the bark Prayer House of the Christians at Caughnawaga on the River Mohawk, the local Iroquois, chiefs, young braves, mothers and maidens, were buzzing and grunting in happy festive confusion. Beaver and lynx pelts bedecked the Chapel's interior, with loops, here and there, of gay beads and wampum. Amd up to the front door the Christian braves had planted a double row of evergreens. All this excitement was due to the concurrence of two big events—the Great White Feast, and the Baptism Day of the niece of their own great Chief.

CHILD OF GOD

The twenty-year-old maiden, Tekakwitha, veiled in white, walked tremblingly up the wooded avenue and up to the font where the priest was waiting. "That day," wrote Pere de Lamberville, S.J., later on, "was the most beautiful one in my apostolic career." Eyes were riveted on this unusually humbly and pious Mohawk maiden. There were the usual were riveted on this unusually humble and signs of the Cross-that same sign for which Rone Goupil had been tomahawked thirtyfour years before by those same Indians just across the river and a few miles to the east. Then, amid flowing waters-"Catherine, I baptize you." Truly now a child of God-Catherine-and still so unmistakably an abomiginal-Tekakwitha!

Across the River

Once these Caughnawaga (now Fonda) Mohawks had lived at Ossernenon across the river, back in the Martyr years of the 1640s. In 1660 there was a smallpox epidemic, and everybody moved a mile down the river. But they still hated the "Prayer," which was their name for the Christian Faith—and they still loved to bait the white Frenchmen, and Canada was quick to punish them. In 1666 their homes, their food supplies, their pelts for trade, and, happily, their brandy, went up in flames before an angry French army.

FONDA AND FURTHER

Now they are across the quiet river. Peace has come. Missioners are welcome. Slowly the Faith is taking root. Here a great chief, here a princess - more and more are instructed and baptized. Most of these went away to the other Caughnawaga, the "Praying Castle" on the St. Lawrence, four miles above Montreal. It was to this haven that Kateri fled in the summer of 1677 from her bigoted uncle and aunts. She had constantly refused to marry, and practiced her faith without any semblance of human respect, her life was made miserable, and all the pagans in the village joined in annoying her. So the missioners advised her to go to the Christian settlement, and arranged for her escape. gave her a note to the missioners in Camada: "We are sending you a precious jewel. Guard it carefully."

THE TREASURE

So Canada's Caughnawaga gained a treasure which the village on the Mohawk had lost deservedly. Even in that especially fervent community, Tekakwitha's single-minded love of God shone out. By an unusual privilege, she was one of very few converts allowed to make her first Holy Communion on Christmas Day, 1677.

You could find Kateri Tekakwitha every morning, even in the bitterness of winter, standing before the Chapel door till it opened at four o'clock—and she stayed till the last Mass was over. Christian gaiety shone from her eyes. She had never learned to read—but the high degree of her spirituality was remarkable. Docility to her director, and the illuminations of the Holy Spirit were all the education she needed.

THE LILY

But what marks off Catherine's holiness is the vow of virginity she made before her spiritual father. This was something new among these children of nature, who could barely learn the sacredness of marriage. With simple directness she told Father Cholonec of her desire to consecrate her virginity to God. And she wanted to do it forthwith there was no need of deliberating on a thing she had long since irrevocably decided on.

During the winter moons of 1679 and 1680 Catherine preferred to remain at Caughnawaga, to be near Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and to lead a penitential life in private. In the middle of this last winter, she visibly sickened, most likely from an advanced tubercular condition. As the Iroquois returned gradually from their winter

hunt, they began to sense that they were fast losing their treasure.

HOLY WEEK AND HOME

It was Wednesday afternoon of Holy Week that the end came. She had received the last Sacraments. All the village knelt praying about her cabin. At three o'clock with almost divine calm, she quietly expired. Hardly had the soul left her wan and wasted body when her glory was revealed. Father Cholenec was leading the prayers for the dying, but stopped to cry in wonder at the new smoothness and beauty shining in the face that before had been pockmarked and shrunken.

Catherine won many graces for others during her short life as a Christian. But up to the last she thought herself unworthy. "I am only a neophyte," she would say, "and you must not ask me to pray for you." But at the last, just before she died, she pledged herself to help all who asked her, and promised to answer everybody's prayers when she reached heaven. She has done so more than generously. The pages of every issue of this MESSAGE bear witness to that.

APRIL ANNIVERSARY

Many and beautiful were the titles given her by Indians and French alike. But the name, "Lily of the Mohawks," is still the most popular—and the best summary of her twenty-four years on earth. It is carried over the inscription on her new tomb:

Kateri Tekakwitha
April 17, 1680
Fairest Flower that ever Bloomed among
True Men

Present subscribers are asked to renew their subscriptions at this time and to obtain new members.

Those who have already renewed their subscriptions are asked to ignore this request.

A Bi-Monthly Message, 60 Cents a Year; Two Copies, \$1.00

FAVORS ATTRIBUTED TO TEKAKWITHA

"My youngest daughter is now seventeen years old. After her birth my health began failing, and I had one operation after the other, five in all. Then I met a Sister where my oldest daughter was a student, and she game me my first prayer card on Kateri and asked me to ask her to help me. We all prayed, and although things were slow to improve, I am now well. I have not had an operation since. I do all my own work, including laundry and baking, for a family of six.

"My children all feel they have received their five positions through her intercession and she always comes to their aid in financial matters.

"When one of my sons was overseas he had a serious accident. He was thrown through the windshield of his jeep, cutting his forehead badly. He was taken to the hospital unconscious. When he came to, his driver asked him who Catherine Tekakwitha wass. He asked why. The driver replied, "that is the last thing you called out as you went through the windshield." My son said, "she is a little Indian girl my mother prays to." After that they both prayed to her, and I am sure she helped bring him home well to us.

"My father, 79 years old, underwent a very serious operation a month ago and thanks, through Kateri's intercession we have him back home safe and getting along beautifully now.

"We have been sent many trials, but with the help of our dear Lord and Kateri we have always seemed to solve our troubles. The children have a Mass said for her canonization each month, and I several during the year. I have sent her Life, medals, etc., to many, and now that the Sisters at our parish have put on a play, I am sure a great many of our parishioners will also have more love for her."

—Duluth, Minn.

"We have been praying to Kateri for my sister who has been ill with pulmonary tuberculosis for over a year. Two weeks ago she had a severe hemorrhage which lasted from four o'clock in the morning until six in the evening. I had to take her to my home in a private ambulance, trip taking about one and a half hours. I put a picture of Kateri in the pocket of my sister's robe and asked Kateri to stop the bleeding until I got her home and called the doctor. All the way in the ambulance she was fine and I promised Kateri I would send a substantial donation to further her Cause. We had a wonderful Christmas as my sister was able to take part in the festivities, although she is still very ill, but Christmas Day her temperature was normal. The little Indian, as I call her, has helped in so many ways. The doctor told me I would have to give her injections of streptomycin twice a day, as I couldn't afford to pay a private nurse to come in and do it. It took me several days to get the courage and I asked Kateri to help me. She did, and now I am able to do it without difficulty." -New York.

"I had an ulcer on the eyeball, which had been cauterized eight times. After the medication wore off, the pain was terrific. I applied Kateri's relic and to me it was miraculous the way the pain disappeared. I feel that through her powerful intercession the vision has cleared in this eye."—New York, N. Y.

"Our high school and grade school students presented the drama of the 'Life of Kateri Tekakwitha.' This play we promised over a year ago at the completion of a novena in honor of Kateri whose intercession we asked for the complete recovery of one of the junior girls who suffered a serious attack of polio. Our request was granted."

-Defiance, Iowa.

"Due to a nervous breakdown I suffered much from a burning itch throughout my body. A short time after making a novena to the 'Little Lily' the itch completely disappeared. To her I owe sincere thanks and deep gratitude. The enclosed is a small offering for her Cause."

—Burlington, Vt.

"I am enclosing a small contribution for the Cause of Venerable Tekakwitha in thanksgiving. I suffered for about three months with a growth on my right elbow. I prayed to the Lily of the Mohawks, and I feel that my prayers were answered as the growth has entirely disappeared."

-White Castle, La.

"I wish to express my thanks to Kateri Tekakwitha for the favor in regaining my voice. I had lost my voice in February through some disturbances in my throat. Praying fervently to Kateri, and using her picture and medal, I am very happy to say on March 3rd her intercession to God for me gave me a sudden relief in my throat and my voice back."

—Hamburg, N. Y.

"Enclosed is an offering for the Cause of Kateri Tekakwitha who has healed me many times from sickness." —Roanoke, Va.

"A small offering to thank Tekakwitha for helping my baby daughter to sleep well at night."

—Tiffin, O. "I wish to thank 'Good Kateri' for a favor received. I have just been notified of my acceptance by a highly important government agency. An intensive investigation was conducted under the most discouraging circumstances. I know that it was Kateri's help that brought my success. We have also prayed to her for my little girl's eyes which had a bad cast. They are greatly improved. I told a friend about Kateri and gave her the relic picture and novena. She had an easy delivery and a healthy baby after previous difficulties and a miscarriage. I will continue to pray to Kateri and do everything in my power to spread her name and fame."

-Philadelphia, Pa.

ADDITIONAL FAVORS

Cures 9 Apartment 1 Financial Aid 14	Relief in Distress 17 Temporal 1 Not Specified 92
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Cures16	Financial Aid
Apartments 6	Relief in Distress10
Employment 4	Not Specified

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