



The Lily of the Mohawks

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AMERICA'S MARVELOUS MAIDEN

Tekakwitha on Fifth Avenue

1960

It has been said that a somebody is sometimes just a nobody that somehow everybody has heard about. In a sense, this is true of Tekakwitha, the subject of our story. She certainly was a nobody — ineligible for anybody's *Who's Who*, except perhaps, the Angels'. And yet somehow everybody has heard about her.

Take New York's Fifth Avenue, for example.

People from all over our land, and most probably every land, have stopped to admire the rich bronze doors which adorn the portals of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. John Angel, their sculptor, wants us to consider the figures which he has brought gloriously to life in the tympanum (the space within the arch above) and those on the doors as a unified idea, having seven dominant notes.

There is Christ, represented in a 63-inch statue as Redeemer of the world, telling His Apostles to go teach all nations. Our Lady and St. John the Baptist, His closest associates in the mystery of the Incarnation, stand in the upper section of the composition. The Apostles are below. The six other notes are made by the 37-inch statuettes standing in niches, three to a door. St. Joseph is there, patron of the whole Church and especially dear to the "fighting faithful" — the Church's workers. Alongside him is St. Patrick, Patron of Ireland and of the New York Cathedral. The middle statuettes are of St. Isaac Jogues — New York State's martyr, Manhattan's first priest, and one of the eight North American martyrs canonized in 1930 — and Mother Cabrini,

raised to the altars July 7, 1946, as the first naturalized United States citizen-saint.

Venerable Mother Seton

Mother Seton, born at 7 State Street, New York City, mother of five children, stands in one of the lower niches. At 34, in her widowhood, she established a religious community in Baltimore. She is considered to be the foundress of the parochial-school system in the United States. Her cause has been introduced in Rome and is progressing. Alongside her, in typical Iroquois dress with leather tunic and beads, is Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.

These six persons were chosen to reflect the cosmopolitan character of the Church in America. There is a Jew, St. Joseph; a Celt, St. Patrick; a Frenchman, Isaac Jogues; an Italian, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini; an Anglo-Saxon American, Mother Seton; and an aboriginal, Kateri Tekakwitha. New York and America are here symbolized as a melting pot; and the Church as an ageless mother and teacher of all men.

How does Tekakwitha fit into this metropolitan American scene? How did this retiring, pockmarked Indian maiden, who died at the age of 24 almost three hundred years ago, come to be immortalized in bronze on Fifth Avenue in the seething 60's?

Some Definitions

Names

Putting first things first, let us get her name straight from the beginning. If you can sing "Nita Ju-a-anita," you can pronounce it: Te-gah-kwet-ha. It trips lightly over the tongues of the Iroquois children at Caughnawaga, who give equal accent to

each syllable. Kateri is, of course, Indian for Catherine. Iroquois names usually describe the character of a person. Tekakwitha means "one who puts things in order" or "who moves things out of her way." Whether that refers to her strong character, pushing away everything that stood in her way of finding God, or to her bumping into things because her eyes were affected by the smallpox she contracted when she was 4 years old, does not matter.

Titles

She also has a title — an odd one, at that — Venerable. It is an odd title for a 24-year-old girl to have until we remember that the honor and title were bestowed on her by Pope Pius XII on January 3, 1943, because of her superman-sized virtues. We can understand what *venerable* means when we ponder the words of the Book of Wisdom: "The understanding of a man is gray hairs. And a spotless life is old age."

Up to now she is no more than that. She is not blessed or saint. Her cause was introduced July 11, 1932, and it has come a long way. Her virtues have been officially established by the Church as heroic. And she is, in the words of the general relator of her cause, Father Antonelli, O.F.M.: "a North American Indian, a genuine redskin, the first of that great and sorely tried human family to be presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites as a candidate for the honors of the altar."

If she is ever beatified and canonized, she will be the first native North American saint.

Tekakwitha at the Vatican

1942

It is June 1942, 262 years after this young lady died. Look in on this remarkable scene in Rome. The Sacred Congregation of Rites has assembled at the Vatican. His Holiness Pope Pius XII presides from the papal throne. The Most Reverend Cardinal-Relator rises to propose a question: "Has it been proved in this instance and for the purpose under consideration that the theological virtues of faith, hope, love of God and neighbor, and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance,

fortitude, and their subordinates were of heroic degree?"

The most reverend cardinals, official prelates, and fathers consultor give their votes. His Holiness weighs their findings and puts off the decision until the following January that he might seek, through repeated prayer, greater light from God. The light came. Cardinal Salotti, prefect of the Sacred Congregation, was summoned to the Pope's presence on January 3, 1943. With him was the promoter general of the Faith. His Holiness offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. And then he solemnly proclaimed:

"It has been proved in this instance and for the purpose under consideration that the theological virtues of faith, hope, love of God and neighbor, and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and subordinate virtues of the venerable Servant of God, Kateri Tekakwitha, were heroic."

Two hundred and eighty-six years before (1656), when she was an hour-old papoose at Ossernenon — now Auriesville, New York — her Algonquin mother, the fond Kahenta, and her father, the proud Mohawk chief, Kenhoronkwa, had agreed that their baby was marvelous. That was just parental pride, of course. Looking down at this amazing Vatican scene almost three hundred years later they were certainly not far wrong. As for Kateri, had she been present at the formidable citation of her virtues, she would surely have run from the room long before the cardinals, let alone His Holiness, had finished.

Marvelous is the word for the story of the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks, called by her tribal neighbors *Onkwe onwe-ke Katsitsiio Teiotsitsian-ekaron*: "the fairest flower that ever bloomed among the redmen."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

PRESENT SUBSCRIBERS TO THE LILY ARE ASKED TO RENEW SUBSCRIPTIONS AT THIS TIME AND TO OBTAIN NEW MEMBERS.

QUARTERLY MESSAGE, \$1.00
A YEAR

Thanksgivings

"I have prayed daily to Venerable Kateri. My daughter was stricken with Polio three years ago, and her condition was very serious. The doctors told us that there was not too much hope for her being able to walk again. As a result of constant prayers and daily intercession to Venerable Kateri her recovery has been very good. She still has some muscle damage, but she is able to get around fairly well with a cane. I have prayed to Kateri to beg God for a complete recovery, and in my heart I feel that some day it will be granted." — Philadelphia, Pa.

"Some few months ago, I fell and injured my leg. I started treating it myself, but it became worse, so I went to our doctor. It developed into an ugly wound. I prayed to Tekakwitha, and made the sign of the cross on the wound with the bit of silk applied to her relics. On my next visit the doctor was amazed at the improvement. I believe I was granted an unusual cure through God and her intercession." — Glendale, Calif.

"In the past year, I feel that Kateri has granted us many favors and helped in time of illness. I promised the enclosed offering to her when she helped our baby rapidly overcome a bad case of impetigo. After applying the relic picture to all the sores, the medication seemed to sweep away everything that, up to that point, refused to budge."

"My mother presented a relic picture to a dying neighbor, and although he had lived 78 unbaptized years, he consented to seeing a priest and died a baptized Catholic. His family could not have been more pleased." — Runnemedede, N. J.

"For the past year I had a sickness that two doctors couldn't seem to do much about, so in desperation one day I turned to 'Little Kateri' and told her I would send \$25.00 out of my vacation pay if she would help me. I haven't had a severe attack since, and am not taking any medicine. Thank you for remembering me in your prayers."

— Corning, N. Y.

"Enclosed donation for Kateri's Cause is in thanksgiving for many favors received, and for a recent one. My husband had a heart attack and the flu at the same time. I was quite worried. I made three novenas to Kateri, and he is now well again. I am sure she helped us again."

— Methuen, Mass.

"Recently I had a spot removed from my face. I promised my little Indian friend Kateri that if this operation came through successfully and was not malignant, I would make this known and send an offering to further her Cause of Canonization. Enclosed find donation." — Los Angeles, Calif.

"This little offering is made in gratitude to Kateri for a favor received. Our grandson's eyes needed an operation. On the last visit to the doctor he said 'much improved, come back in a year'. — Flint, Mich.

"The enclosed offering is sent in thanksgiving to Venerable Kateri for successful result of medical treatment for myself and successful outcome of a project for my daughter." — Piqua, Ohio.

"I promised this little donation if my daughter came safely through childbirth. She has a lovely son, thanks to Venerable Kateri, and I must include St. Gerald also."

— Southgate, Ky.

"Kateri has granted me many favors. A few weeks ago I wrote for your prayers asking in petition that my son would receive a position that seemed almost impossible for him to obtain. He had an interview but was not selected, and was very disappointed. However, I kept praying to Tekakwitha, and to everyone's amazement he was called back and given the position."

— New Haven, Conn.

"Please send me for the enclosed five dollars, medals, pictures, etc., of Kateri Tekakwitha. I am doing this for a friend of mine in the construction business, for again she got them two good jobs."

— Kansas City, Kan.

"The enclosed offering is to be used to help further Kateri's Cause. Without her help, my husband would have been unable to lose over eleven pounds in fourteen days, and would have been unable to re-enlist in the Service unless he did lose that much weight during that short period of time. Since he has over fifteen years of active military service, it was most important to us that he be allowed to remain in the Service until his retirement. We ask for Kateri's aid very often and she has never failed us." — No. Las Vegas, Nev.

"My sister and I prayed to Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha to intercede with Almighty God for the favor of a good position after having been ill and losing a former position and civil service rights. Miraculously in a round-about way, she was restored to a position in an entirely different capacity but regained her civil service status."

— Chicago, Ill.

"I have received so many favors from Tekakwitha — needed money; health for my family and myself; better jobs; in fact everything I ask, it seems. I named my little girl Catharine in her honor. Enclosed is a donation I promised." — Palestine, Ohio.

"I am sending this donation to help further the Cause of Venerable Tekakwitha. I am sure that it was through the efforts of Kateri that we were able to receive a settlement of one of our past due accounts without a law suit, as we had used every means possible." — Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

ADDITIONAL FAVORS

Cures	18	Sale of Property	3
Apartments	4	Spiritual &	
Employment	7	Temporal	4
Financial Aid	11	Successful Exams	1
Relief in Distress	17	Successful	
Safe Trip	6	Operation	5
Not Specified		216	

PETITIONS

Cures	189	Sale of Property	11
Apartments	9	Spiritual &	
Conversions	5	Temporal	18
Employment	15	Successful	
Financial Aid	29	Operations	8
Relief in Distress	51	Vocations	3
Safe Delivery	7	World Peace	3
Safe Trip	6	Not Specified	156

Obituary

Most Rev. Howard J. Carroll, D.D., Altoona, Pa.
 Most Rev. Simon Chu, S.J., D.D., Hong Kong, China
 Most Rev. Duane G. Hunt, D.D., Salt Lake City, Utah
 Rt. Rev. Msgr. A. E. Murphy, New York, N. Y.
 Rev. Thomas D. Barry, S.J., Weston, Mass.
 Rev. Aloysius A. Breen, S.J., Cincinnati, Ohio
 Rev. Edward Dowling, S.J., St. Louis, Mo.
 Rev. Daniel F. X. Hart, S.J., Jersey City, N. J.
 Rev. James H. Hilden, Albany, N. Y.
 Rev. Hubert Schmitz, Dayton, Ky.
 Rev. Bernard V. Shea, S.J., Worcester, Mass.
 Rev. John W. Tynan, S.J., Jersey City, N. J.
 Rev. Francis X. Wilkie, S.J., Fairfield, Conn.
 Mother Marie Gerard Phelan, R.S.H.M., Tarrytown, N. Y.
 Sister M. Catherine, M.S.B.T., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Sister M. Gerald, Rochester, N. Y.
 Mr. Walter Breuning, Peru, Ill.
 Mrs. Mary Burgio, Phillipsburg, N. J.
 Miss Catherine Cunningham, Westfield, Mass.
 Mr. W. A. Furney, Columbus, Ohio
 Mrs. Helen Grundman, Redondo Beach, Cal.
 Mr. John Keenan, Sr., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Mrs. Nora M. Long, San Francisco, Calif.

TO MAKE TEKAKWITHA KNOWN AND LOVED

MEMBERSHIP

In Tekakwitha League, including quarterly "Lily of the Mohawks", one dollar yearly.

LEAFLETS

Sketch, picture, Novena and prayers, 5c for 2; 25c doz. With silk applied to relic 10c.

Sketch, lithograph picture, Novena and prayers, 5c; 50c doz. With silk applied to relic: 20c.

PICTURE

Small, lithograph with prayer, 5c for 2; 25c doz.; silk applied to relic; 15c ea.

Large, 6 by 8 in., brown leatherette frame, acetate face, 75c.

SHORT LIFE

32 pp. by Fr. Coffey, S. J. with picture and prayer. 15c.

MEDAL

Image and title, special metal 20c; silver 60c; gold; inquire prices.

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE

30 WEST 16TH STREET, NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

REV. THOMAS J. COFFEY, S.J., V. Postulator for Her Canonization