



# Lily of the Mohawks

TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE  
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## LETTER FROM THE POSTULATOR GENERAL AT ROME ON THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE CAUSE OF VEN. KATERI

Father Paul Molinari, S.J., last year succeeded Father Carlo Miccinelli, S.J., who was Kateri's Postulator General for many years. Father Miccinelli carefully steered Kateri's cause through the initial Roman processes and, in due time, saw the Iroquois maiden declared 'Venerable', the title now given to a Servant of God whose virtues have been recognized as heroic by the Holy Father. In January, 1943, Pope Pius XII, on the recommendation of the Congregation of Rites, signed the decree concerning the heroicity of Kateri's virtues. This was no mean achievement. And Fr. Thomas J. Coffey, S.J., the former Vice-postulator of the Cause in the United States had a great part in the work and shared in this singular triumph.

Fr. Paul Molinari is in his early forties. He was ordained to the priesthood on September 6, 1952, after studying at the Philosophy Faculty of the Aloisianum at Gallarate in Varese, Italy, at the Theology Faculty of Casa S. Antonio in Turin and at Heythrop College, England. He obtained his Doctorate in Theology in 1956 at the Pontifical Gregorian University at Rome.

The Postulator General of the Lily of the Mohawks is currently occupied as the Postulator General for all the Jesuit causes; he also holds the post of President of the Union of Postulators General, is Professor of Ascetical Theology at the Gregorian University and at the Casa S. Antonio in Chieri, Italy. He was also one of the *periti* or experts on the Theological Commission of Vatican Council II, having been instrumental in great part in the writing of the chapter on the role of the Saints in the Constitution of the Church.



Fr. Paul Molinari, S.J., Postulator General of the Society of Jesus for all the Jesuit causes.

Fr. Molinari has already written considerably. Besides his many contributions to international encyclopedias, theological dictionaries, magazines and cultural reviews, he has published: *Juliana of Norwich*, the teaching of the great fourteenth century English mystic (1958); *I Santi e il loro culto*, now translated into German, Spanish and English (1962). *Saints: Their Place in the Church*, published by Sheed & Ward, is a competent and comprehensive treatment of the role of the saints in the salvific mission of the Church.

How fortunate are Kateri's devotees that Fr. Molinari is now in complete charge of the Lily of the Mohawk's cause. One of the first requests made to Fr. Molinari after he assumed his new post in Rome was to send a full account of the present position of the cause of Ven. Kateri. After the close of the Vatican Council he was able to devote considerable time to the investigation and research required and now has amply fulfilled his promise. In this issue of the "Lily of the Mohawks" we are pleased to publish his letter sent from Rome on the present *status* of the cause we all here in America hold so dear.

# Letter from Rome on Ven. Kateri Tekakwitha

Naturally I had not forgotten my earlier promise to give you, Father Schlaerth, a full account of the actual situation of the Cause as far as miracles are concerned, but during the Council and in the time immediately following upon it, this was absolutely impossible. I was, of course, quite familiar with the situation, but before writing to you, I wanted to obtain some more detailed information on some individual points and this has taken up a considerable amount of time. Fr. Miccinelli, now 89 years old, who for so many years has so intensely and successfully worked for the Cause of Kateri, was consulted whenever his very poor physical condition allowed. Other bits of information had to be obtained by correspondence which caused considerable delay. But in the end I have succeeded in filling in the remaining small gaps in our documentation.

**THE CASE OF MRS. MCGAULEY:** An apostolic Process *super miro* was constructed in the years 1942-1945 in the diocese of Marquette (U.S.A.) so as to ascertain the facts concerning the reputed miraculous cure of Mrs. McGauley. The acts of this Process were duly sent to Rome and presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites (hereafter termed SRC), where they remained for a considerable amount of time before we could get down to work on them. This delay was largely due to the difficulties caused by the war. When the Acts were examined, owing to the lack of communication with Rome during that time, a number of juridical mistakes were discovered, some of so serious a nature that, in the very beginning, the whole process seemed to be invalid. In addition to this some medical requirements had not been fully complied with, so that additional evidence was necessary. Since the carrying out of this type of Process requires a highly specialized knowledge, it is not at all surprising that these mistakes were made.

Normally the Postulator General is present during some part of the Process to advise the local authorities and it is also customary that a medical specialist be present who is thoroughly familiar with the requirements of the SRC. But all these factors do not explain fully the great delay that occurred between the end of the Process and the actual time it was presented for discussion to the SRC. The reason for this delay must in the first place be sought in the fact that a reasonable time must elapse before the cure is examined, because only in this way is it possible to ascertain scientifically whether or not the cure has been complete and lasting. But of still greater importance was the fact that the Patrons of a Cause cannot pre-

sent the miracles individually but they must present at the same time all the miracles that are requested. This meant in our case that the two miracles required for the beatification of Kateri had to be presented at the same time.

**THE CASE OF MRS. KENNING:** This second miracle occurred in the diocese of Sioux City (U.S.A.) where in the years 1955-1956 an apostolic Process was constructed so as to ascertain the facts concerning the alleged miraculous cure of Mrs. Kenning. The acts of this Process were also sent to Rome but again a reasonable amount of time has to elapse to allow the specialists to come to a scientific judgment on the question whether or not the cure was lasting and complete. This point was of particular importance in this case since the patient had been affected by cancer—a disease which frequently has even longer periods of a real or apparent stasis. It was felt, however, that in 1962 the two cases of Mrs. McGauley and Mrs. Kenning could officially be proposed for discussion to the SRC and this was done. It was now the first task of the Postulation to prove that the two Processes were valid; that is, that from a legal point of view they could serve as a safe basis for the further discussions in the SRC. After the Postulation had solved with considerable difficulty the objections against the defects in legal form, etc., the SRC issued a decree by which it was stated that both Processes were valid (Oct. 13, 1961). Through this decree the way was now open for the immediate preparation of the discussions in the SRC. For this purpose the two Processes were translated and edited and put in print. As is customary the SRC appointed two medical specialists for each of the two cases and asked them to present their expert judgment in writing. These four statements were also edited and put in print and added to the other completed materials.

However, before the medical panel of the SRC could meet and discuss the cases and give their final decision, Mrs. Kenning unfortunately died—of cancer—so that her case had to be ruled out immediately. This also meant that the case of Mrs. McGauley could not come up for discussion since, according to the above-mentioned rule, the Patrons of a Cause have to present at the same time two miracles required for beatification. In short, we actually possess only one processed miracle case (Mrs. McGauley) and this case has not been discussed, let alone approved by the SRC. The only approval granted to this McGauley case concerns exclusively its legal validity; that is, the fact that it can serve as a legitimate basis of discussion.

The whole substance of the question, namely, whether or not the patient was cured miraculously or not, will have to be discussed when the second case (and at this writing there is none at hand) can be presented. Since the expert judgment presented by the two medical specialists can also be conflicting, we may have hope but no certainty as to the final outcome of this future discussion by the medical panel of the SRC.

**THE OLD "MIRACLES":** In his zeal for the speedy beatification of Kateri, Fr. Miccinelli proposed then, that instead of the case of Mrs. Kenning, the SRC should examine and pronounce upon six old "miracles" which were said to have occurred quite immediately after the death of Kateri. He insisted particularly on the so-called miracle of the face of Kateri which, according to reliable old eye-witness accounts, had in death shown no traces of the hideous effects of smallpox which she had suffered as a child. Through his personal Roman contacts Fr. Miccinelli succeeded in obtaining, in January 1963, the special approval of Pope John XXIII that a *Congregatio particularis* of the SRC be summoned to decide the preliminary question whether such old "miracles" could be taken into account and used. While making this concession, Pope John, however, made it perfectly clear that he wished to leave the decision of this question entirely to the SRC. From the correspondence and still more from my own personal inquiries with the responsible people of the SRC, it is evident that they were unanimously opposed to this proposal and, in fact, nothing ever came of it.

**THE CASE OF MRS. COUVRETTE AND OTHER CASES:** In the meantime Fr. Bechard, the Vice-postulator of the Cause for Canada, had in March, 1958, forwarded special information to Fr. Miccinelli concerning the cure of Mrs. Couvrette which, according to her physician, could not be explained on natural grounds. This case was examined in Rome by an eminent specialist who concluded that the case did not look too promising. Since at that time Mrs. Kenning was still alive and her case then looked to be much stronger, the case of Mrs. Couvrette was left aside for the time being. However, when Mrs. Kenning died and the question of the old "miracles" had fallen through, the case of Mrs. Couvrette was again considered by the Postulation.

Another very careful analysis of all the data was made but it was found again that the case was very weak indeed: the patient had undergone an operation after the alleged cure so that it remained doubtful whether the cure had to be ascribed to this operation or to a supernatural intervention. It was, however, suggested that one might argue that

the non-recurrence of the malignant tumor was something miraculous. A detailed list of questions on this point was sent to Fr. Bechard and from the replies it was obvious that there had been very little hope right from the outset. Since then nothing has happened in the case to warrant any further hope at this writing. Between 1963 and now we have occasionally received reports concerning some extraordinary cures but none of them could stand up to the rigorous tests of the specialists we have consulted. In this case it was understandable that the idea gained ground that a great number of bishops, interested in the Cause, might during the Vatican Council, petition the Holy Father to dispense with the necessity of a second miracle in the Cause of Kateri. Such a petition was actually presented by all the Canadian Bishops. Unfortunately their generous effort was doomed from the outset since their request went counter to the ideas of Pope Paul and his predecessors, especially Pius XII and Pope John XXIII. The Holy Father in this respect firmly held to the practice of referring so important a matter to the SRC and the Sacred Congregation has not acted to date on his recommendation.

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY:** We have one case of a miracle that has been duly processed. The Process in question has been declared valid from the legal point of view, but the case itself has neither been discussed nor approved by the SRC. This case can be submitted for discussion and approval only when we have another case duly processed and declared valid legally. So far as explained no such case has turned up. It is therefore imperative now to stir up the faithful and the devotees of Kateri by every possible means to promote her cause and especially to encourage them to invoke the intercession of Tekakwitha in cases of desperate illness. It should also be suggested to them to report such cases of cures to the Vice-postulators of their territory. When news of such cases comes in, they should be followed up with great care and diligence and the Postulator General should be informed as soon as possible.

I will always be at your complete disposition and will have the cases examined here at Rome by the best specialists who are familiar with the requirements of the SRC. With a view to the importance of this great Cause and considering the great devotion of so many of the faithful towards the Lily of the Mohawks, I have no doubt that your generous and efficient efforts will be crowned with success in a not-too-distant future. Therefore, let us continue to pray, hope and work for the Cause! — Paul Molinari, S.J., Postulator General.

## THANKSGIVINGS FOR FAVORS RECEIVED THROUGH VEN. KATERI

**BRAIN DAMAGE:** I have been saying the Novena prayers to Kateri for five years for a little nephew who has brain damage. For three years he was not able to walk but is now walking very well. I attribute this favor to the intercession of Ven. Kateri.

—San Antonio, Texas

**UPSET IN FAMILY:** In November my daughter and son-in-law were very upset. I made a novena to Kateri because she has always helped me. My daughter called to tell me everything was all right, so once again Kateri helped me. But recently I received word that my son-in-law had a heart attack and so I am now making another novena for his complete recovery.

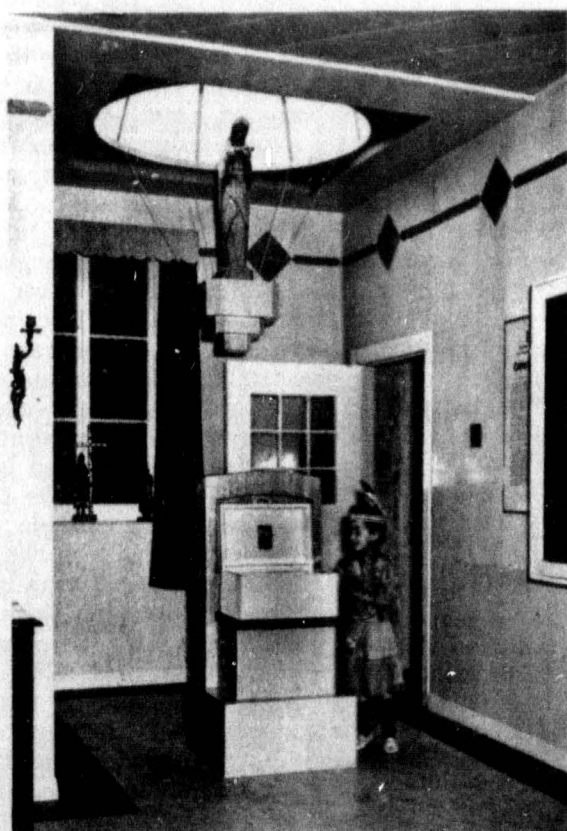
—Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

**GASTRIC HEMORRHAGING:** My husband was taken to the hospital with severe gastric hemorrhaging. We interceded with Kateri to save him. After treatment and tests they found no ulcer. Also my son, a month later, fell from playground bars and broke his arm near the shoulder socket. After prayers to Kateri he recovered with no permanent damage. We believe these were favors received through Kateri.

—Penfield, N.Y.

**LEARNING BOOKKEEPING SYSTEM:** Kateri has come to my aid with a new and difficult bookkeeping system. Thanks to her I am getting along nicely with the new system. Please send me more Kateri novena leaflets, bookmarks and the Fr. Coffey pamphlet on Kateri.

—Rego Park, N.Y.



Indian maiden viewing the relics of the Lily of the Mohawks in the Kateri Museum at Caughnawaga, Canada. Her relics have been kept here in the Jesuit Residence of the Mission Church of St. Francis Xavier since 1719.

## WAYS TO MAKE KATERI TEKAKWITHA KNOWN AND LOVED

**MEMBERSHIP:** In the TEKAKWITHA LEAGUE—including bulletin "Lily of the Mohawks"—one dollar a year. Also occasional donations as a league member for the promotion of the Cause; for office and printing expenses which are needed and welcome always.

**REPORT** favors, even the small ones and of course miracles, received through her intercession. Thanksgivings will be published in the "Lily" bulletin.

**SPREAD HER DEVOTION** by passing out her holy cards and literature to your friends and parishioners. By promoting her cause as a project for your club, organization or society, or through the schools in your area. Leaflets and materials can be obtained from the Tekakwitha League at Auriesville, N.Y.

**KATERI HOLY PICTURES** — small and medium sizes — in color with prayer in English and other various languages—2 for 5¢. Special pictures and prayer with silk applied to Kateri relics, 20¢ each. Large colored picture (6" x 8") in special leatherette frame, 75¢. Postcards in color—5¢ ea. (\$.50 dozen).

**TEKAKWITHA NOVENA LEAFLETS** — 5¢ ea. **KATERI MEDALS** in a special metal, 20¢ ea.; in sterling silver, \$1.50 (special discount on quantities).

**BOOKS:** *Kateri Tekakwitha, America's Marvelous Maiden* by Thomas J. Coffey, S.J. (32pp. pamphlet) 25¢ ea. *Kateri of the Mohawks* by Cecilia Buehrle (200pp. paperback) 60¢ ea. **STATUES OF KATERI** for various sizes and prices. Inquire through the Tekakwitha League. (Prices include postage.)

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AURIESVILLE, NEW YORK 12016

Reverend William J. Schlaerth, S.J., Vice-postulator for Her Canonization