

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Altar Screen Presentation

Paintings by Giovanna Paponetti

Artist/Author

Taos artist, Giovanna Paponetti formerly from New York state, has always been interested in Native American History. In 2005 she was commissioned by St. John the Baptist church at Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, NM to paint the life story of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha that was to be part of an eighteen-foot altar screen in the church.

Shortly after receiving the commission, she travelled to the Kahnawake Mohawk reservation along with Father Terry Brennan and six women, most of whom are part of the Kateri Circle at St. John's.

She received permission to photograph many Mohawk people who became models for her paintings.

On 19 December 2011 the Pope signed a decree recognizing the validity of the miracle needed for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. The canonization ceremony will take place on 21 October 2012. With that canonization, Blessed Kateri will become the first Native American saint.

Here is the altar screen at St. John's church in Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo containing the twenty-one paintings by Giovanna depicting the life of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.



The Birth of Kateri – Spring 1656

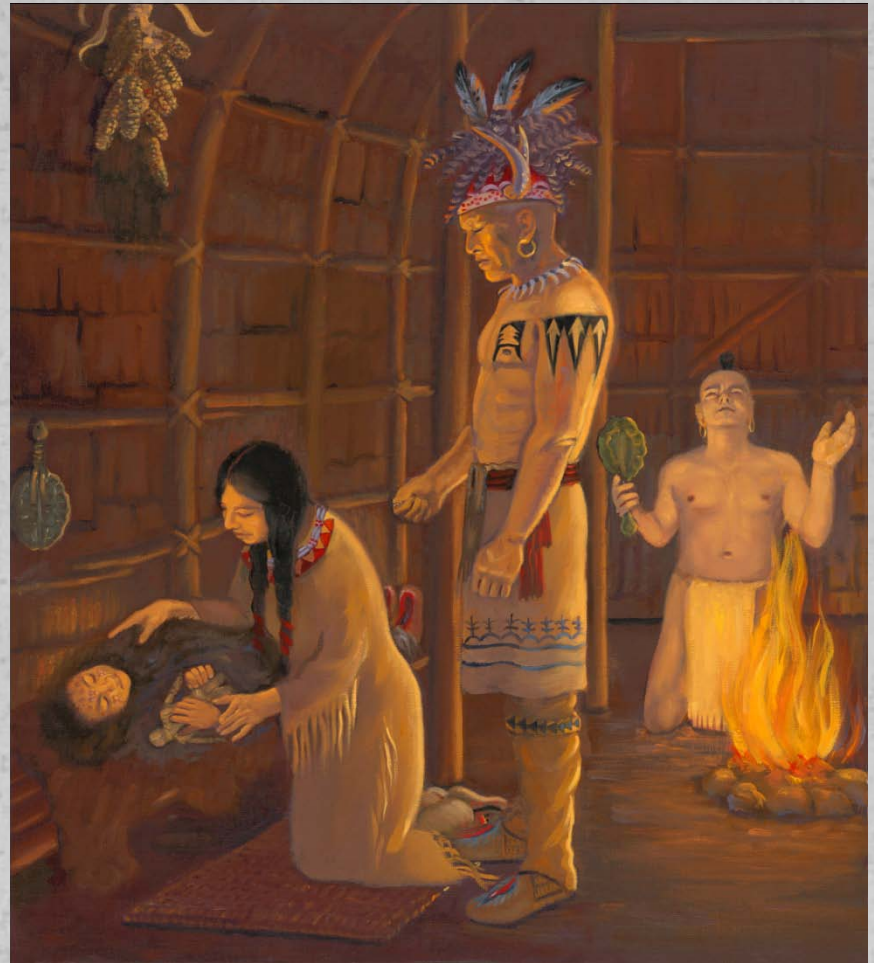
- Kateri Tekakwitha, named Ioragode (Little Sunshine), was born in upstate New York to an Algonquin mother, Kahontake (Meadow), and a Mohawk father Chief Tsaniton-gowa (Great Beaver).



Little Sunshine Survives Smallpox - 1660

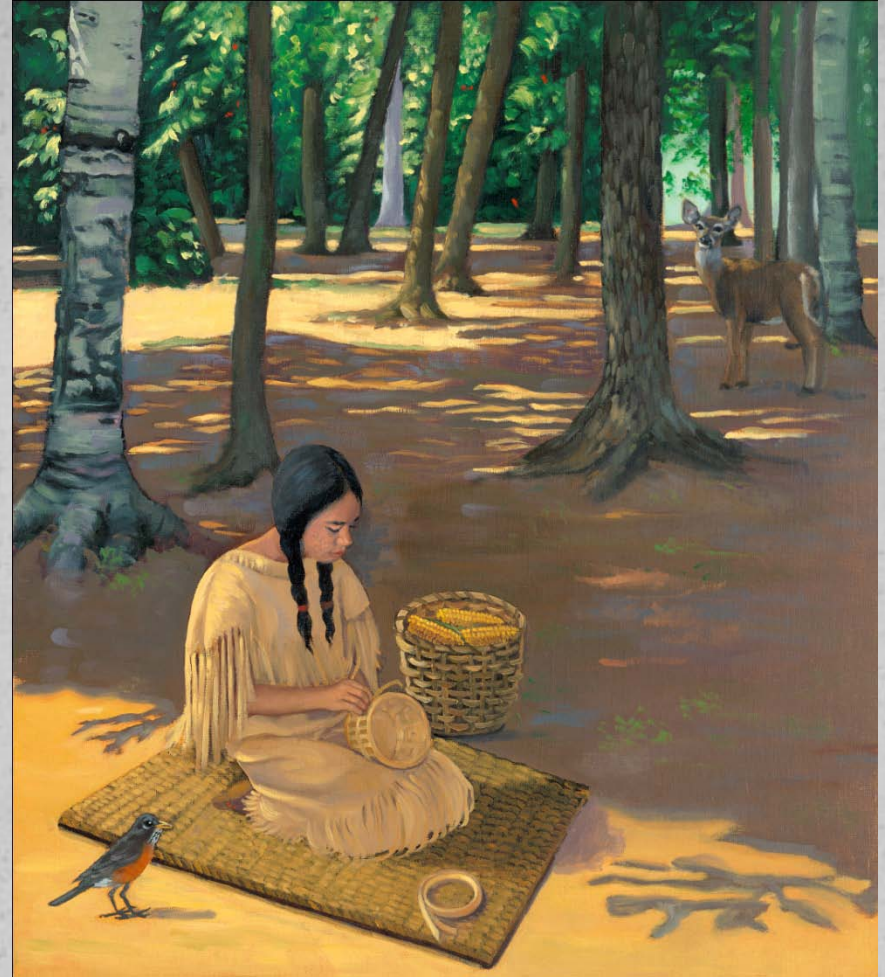
Little Sunshine was left an orphan at age four in the bitter cold winter of 1660, when an epidemic of smallpox spread through the longhouses.

Her father's sister, Karitha and her husband, Iowarano, who became chief, watched over her during her illness and slow recovery, and became her guardians.



Tekakwitha Working on Crafts - 1666

- Rather than playing like other children, Kateri isolated herself and enjoyed working on crafts in the woods surrounded by nature.
- Smallpox at an early age left Kateri severely marked and her vision impaired.



Tekakwitha's First Encounter With the Black Robes – 1667



When the Iroquois Nation decided to make peace with the French, Iowerno, Kateri's uncle and Mohawk chief, was encouraged to invite the Black Robes (Jesuit Priests) into his longhouse.

Kateri listens intently to their conversation as she prepares a meal of sagamity for them.

Tekakwitha Foils a Marriage Attempt – 1670

- An unsuccessful attempt was made by Kateri's guardians to have her marry a warrior.
- She ran out of the longhouse, when she realized the deception.



Christmas Deepens Tekakwitha's Faith – 1670

- Captivated by the creche with familiar Mohawk decorations, the interpretation of the birth of Jesus transfixed Kateri's attention.
- In the true spirit of Christmas, birth is celebrated in the revelation of divinity's participation in the human experience.



Tekakwitha's desire to Become a Catholic – 1675

- One day while Tekakwitha was nursing a sore foot, Father James de Lamberville surprised her when he entered the longhouse.
- Tekakwitha confided in him about her desire to be baptized.



Tekakwitha's Baptism Easter Sunday – 1676

- It was a very joyous Easter Sunday for Tekakwitha. She chose Katherine - Kateri in Mohawk – as her Christian name, in honor of St. Catherine of Siena.
- At this moment of purification, Kateri was filled with joy.



Kateri Threatened by a Warrior – 1676

- The newfound ecstasy that emanated from Kateri, now exhibited in all of her daily chores and activities, was beyond the understanding of her family and the community.
- One day a warrior even threatened to kill her if she would not give up these new ways. Kateri remained unafraid.



Kateri is Taken to the Sault Mission by Canoe - 1677



- Father de Lamberville feared for Kateri's safety, and even for her life.
- He secretly made arrangements with an Oneida chief, Hot Ashes, a Christian from the Sault Mission in New France, for Kateri to be taken there to continue to grow spiritually in a thriving environment.

Arrival at the Sault Mission – 1677



- The exhausted travelers were welcomed to the mission by Fathers Chauchetiere and Cholenec. Kateri was greeted by Anastasia. Tegonhatsihongo who had been a friend of Kateri's mother. She became Kateri's second mother and spiritual instructor.

Kateri's Penances – 1677

- As time went by at the Sault, Kateri took it upon herself to inflict acts of penance and mortification as a way of expressing sorrow for her sins. Any attempts by the priests and others to moderate Kateri's actions were met with strong opposition.



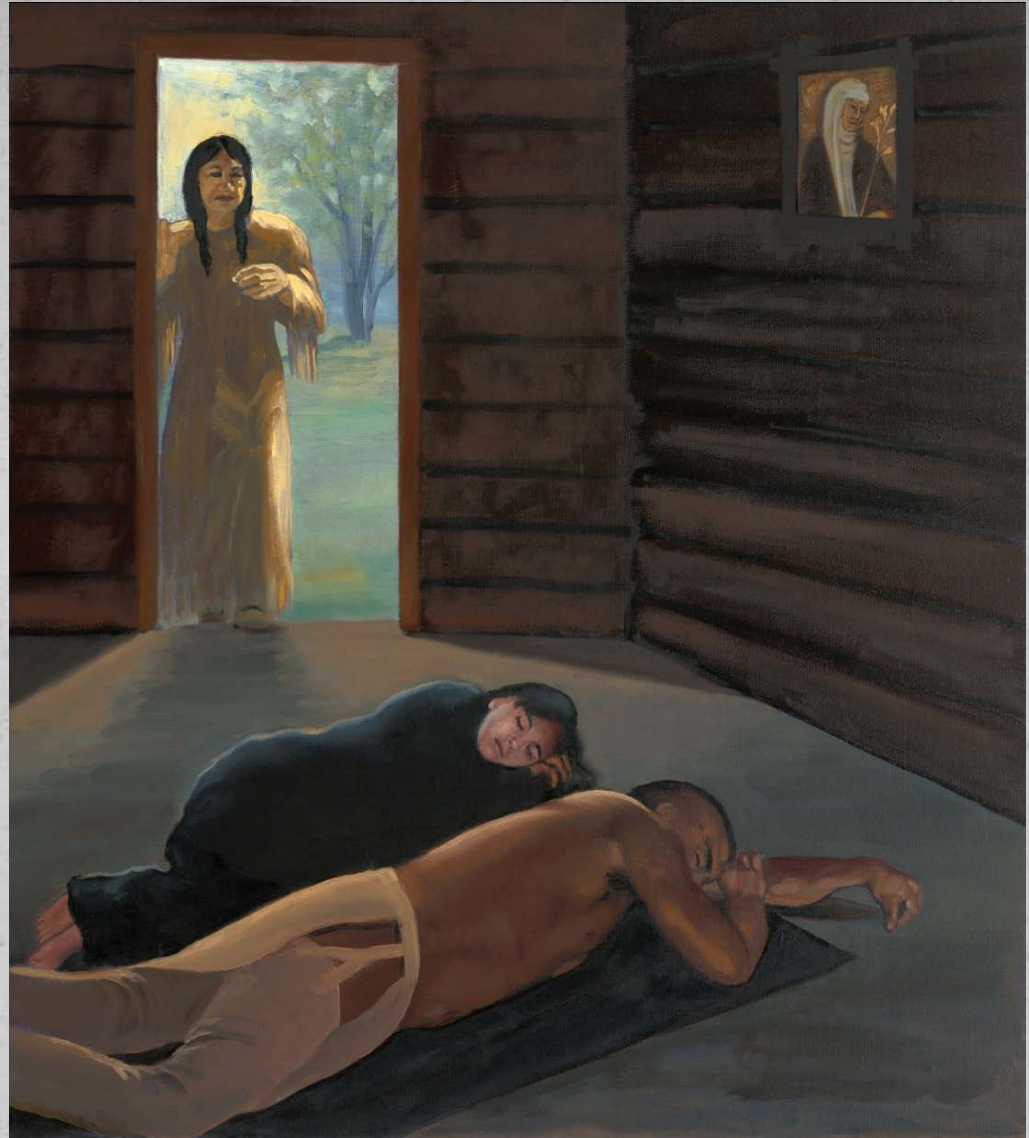
Kateri's First Holy Communion – 1677

- Kateri's life was forever changed by the sacred event of receiving the Holy Eucharist.
- She was even more passionate than before about her destiny to be one with God.



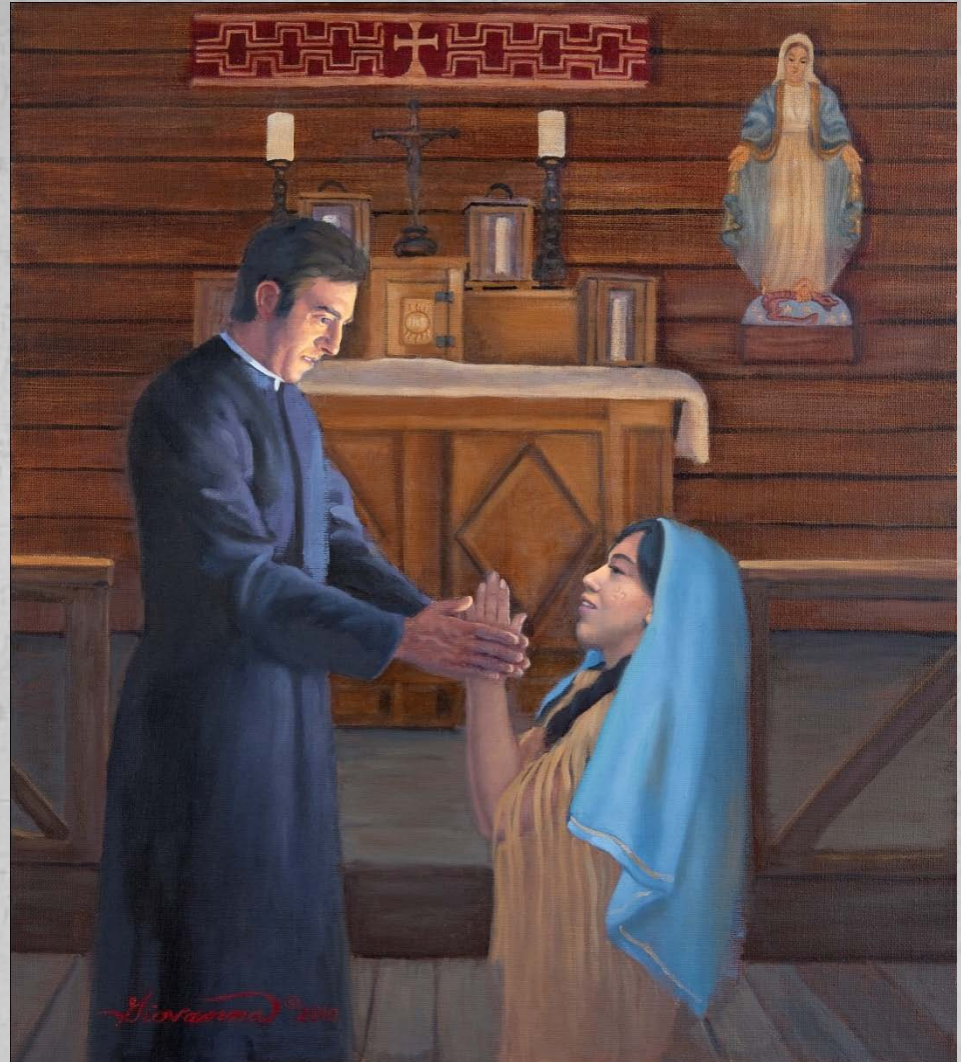
Accusation of Infidelity – 1678

- A Christian woman accused Kateri of having an affair with her husband.
- Kateri denied the accusations and upheld her innocence.
- A judgment was made in her favor and the matter was dismissed.



Kateri's Vow of Perpetual Virginity – 1679

- Kateri was completely focused on that which gave her the most joy, being close to God.
- She told her friends that this satisfied her need for love.
- On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, Kateri Tekakwitha gave herself to Jesus Christ and promised perpetual virginity.



Kateri with the Community of Holy Women – 1679



- Kateri and her band of sisters filled their days with acts of kindness to the sick and the poor, working tirelessly in the fields and seeking new ways to attain holiness through their actions.

Kateri in Ecstasy – 1679



Kateri's greatest experience of love was her transfixation into the heavenly world of divine love ushered in by the intervention of ethereal presence from the Heavenly Father.

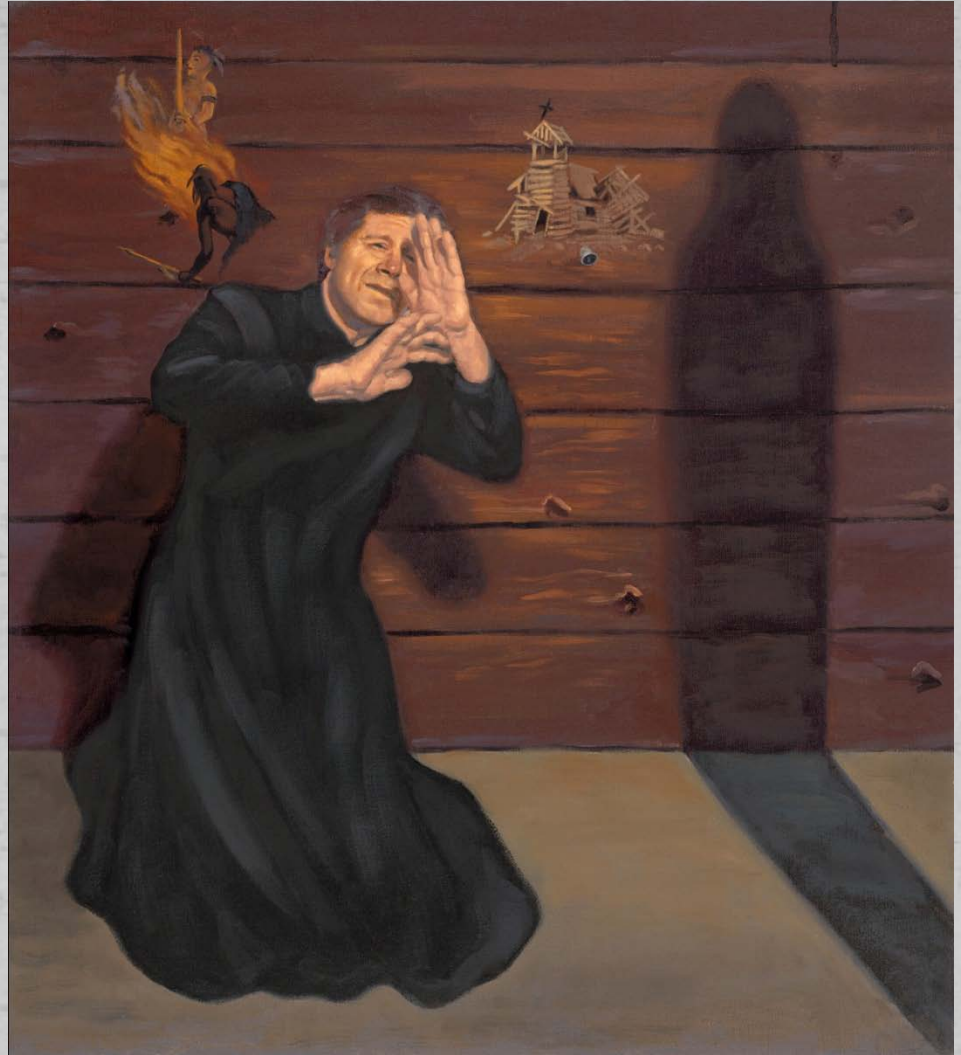
The Death of Kateri – The First Miracle – 1680

- At the tender age of 24, Kateri's frail health and intense physical suffering finally took its toll.
- Minutes after her death, Kateri's smallpox scars miraculously disappeared.
- This was to be the first of many miracles attributed to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.



Kateri Appears to Father Chauchetiere – 1680

- Kateri appeared to Father Chauchetiere six days after her death at four in the morning, as he was preparing to meditate.
- A brilliant light entered the room, no words were spoken, but two visions appeared next to her.



Kateri Reappears to Father Chauchetiere – 1682

- Kateri revisited Father Chauchetiere in an apparition once again.
- He received a divine request to paint portraits of her.
- Many healings occurred when the paintings were placed upon the foreheads of the sick.



Miracle of the Blue Blanket – 1683

- Hot Ashes, the Oneida Chief who assisted with Kateri's escape to New France, received the greatest gift of all from her.
- His wife, Garhio, was dying. Kateri's blue blanket was placed over her and she was healed.



Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Altar Screen



Giovanna completed these paintings in May of 2010. It has been an honor to work on this project and this experience will always be an important part of her life.

The Pueblo group from New Mexico traveled to Auriesville, NY, Kateri's birthplace, as well as Fonda, NY, where Kateri spent many years of her young life before being brought to the Sault Mission in New France, (near present day Montreal, Canada). Kateri died there in 1680 at the age of 24. She touched the hearts and lives of many people in her young life and continues to do so today.



1666

CAUGHNAWAGA CASTLE SITE

1693

DECLARED A NATIONAL HISTORICAL PLACE, AUGUST OF 1973

Archeological investigations of this site were started in 1943. This consisted of surface searching only.

In Spring of 1945 the field was plowed. During June of 1945 a test trench was opened within one of the many evident darkened areas on the surface. A number of post molds were discovered in the soil, but none to indicate a stockade line.

The Van Epps Hartley Chapter of the N.Y.S. Archeological Association dug a trench 60 feet long and 5 feet wide in 1948. The stockade lines, however, were not located.

Beginning in 1950 the native American Village (Castle) of Caughnawaga was thoroughly excavated by Fr. Thomas Grassmann,

a Conventual Franciscan Friar, with the help of the N.Y.S. Archeological Association. It was completed in 1956.

The Turtle Clan of the Mohawk lived in this "castle" of Caughnawaga. A castle refers back to a European term meaning "fortified". This castle was surrounded by a wooden stockade, 15 to 18 feet high, protecting from intruders. Caughnawaga means "on the rapids" or "on the water," referring to the Mohawk River. This castle is the only completely excavated Iroquois Village in the world.

It was here in this castle that Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha lived a good part of her earthly life and during this time she was baptized and dedicated her life to the Lord.

White Concrete Pillars-these are surveyor markers.

Small White Metal Posts or Markers-these posts form an archeological grid over the whole site area for record keeping. What has been found within each square of the grid has been accurately kept.

Small Grey Posts-these go into the tops of the post molds which formed the stockade. You will note that the castle was doubly stockaded. 3,041 posts were used. The main gate was in the wall, there were no openings in the north and east walls.

Small Reddish Posts-these posts mark the post molds of the outer walls of the longhouses. There were 12 longhouses, the long houses were covered with elm bark.

Small Yellow Posts- these posts mark the posts which supported the benches or beds which ran along the interior walls of each longhouse.

NATIONAL KATERI TEKAKWITHA SHRINE, ROUTE 5 • FONDA, NY

Archeological Site of Caughnawaga Castle



Turkey feather found on trail leading to the spring
where Blessed Kateri fetched her water.



Father Terry Brennan at Saint Francis Xavier Church at
Kahnawake in Canada.



A white dove appeared for five days at Giovanna's house while she was creating the paintings of the life of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.

