

September 24, 1952.

KATERI,
Mission Saint Francois Xavier,
Caughnawaga, Que.

I, Kateri Curotte Walker, wish to publicly acknowledge and offer thanks to the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha for her assistance in my spiritual and material needs, as follows:

In 1945, I was, on more than one occasion, within a few yards of KATERI'S Relics but knew nothing of her, beyond the fact that I bore her name. However, my aunt Mrs. Theresa Curotte, urged me to go to KATERI and ask her to pray for me. I agreed that it would be nice but never went, even though aunt Theresa said KATERI might obtain the return of my sight, as I have been blind for many years.

In 1948, I returned to Caughnawaga for good, after an absence of 39 years, and then I became ill. During my six weeks in hospital I was mostly semi-conscious, but during my lucid moments I prayed to God to take me Home. I asked for a priest to help me get ready for death. I am very deaf and when the priest came I failed to understand what he said, and accused him of being only a doctor, just pretending to be a priest so as to humor me because I was so ill!

Then I cried all night, cried myself into a fever. But took comfort in the fact I had made my Easter Duty and wasn't aware of having committed any serious sin. Besides the Sacred Heart of Jesus has never let me down so I placed my poor weary heart in His Hands, and feared no evil. Then I called on all the saints I could think of, asking them to pray for me that I might die a happy death.

All of a sudden the name KATERI TEKAKWITHA came to my mind, and that she being an Indian of the Mohawk tribe, as I am, would help me in this my last hours. So I prayed:- "Our Lady of Victory and KATERI TEKAKWITHA pray for me to the Sacred Heart. He is merciful and kind, He will listen to your prayers on my behalf." I repeated it ten times.

As I prayed, I had a dream-vision:- I went away up in the clouds. There was the crescent moon on the left and the most beautiful star on the right. As I reached for the star I heard a wonderful Voice saying:- "My child, you aim high. You aim for perfection. Very well you may have it." I reached for the star, then stopped, feeling so ashamed of my selfishness that I withdrew my hand. Then, to the right of the star I saw the most beautiful Smile I have ever seen, with the most beautiful Eyes above it. Words cannot describe it, nor can I tell the color of the Eyes.. Again the Voice spoke:- "Very well, my child, you may go back, but leave all you see." And then I awoke.

So, I did not die! After six weeks I was sent home to my aunt:- Mrs. Mary Ann Laborgne, whom I called Ma, as she was like a mother to me. But she was ill herself, her arm just out of a sling, and unable to take care of me. So I went to the home of her daughter- Mrs. Lena Jacobs. Whilst there, I had a relapse and even the Wonder Drugs failed to help me. A large painful sore appeared at the base of my spine. Dr. Joe Jacobs was called to see me and as he said gangrene might set in, he ordered me to hospital.

But that was impossible for various reasons. So Father Real Lalonde of Mission Saint Francois Xavier, Caughnawaga, came to my aid after my cousin Mrs. Ida Smith explained my situation to him.

And this is where it seems the Venerable KATERI took a hand. For Father got in communication with the Directress of a nursing home named:- KATERI PAVILION, in honor of the Lily of the Mohawks. And the lady in charge Madame Alma Bariteau very kindly took me in.

I later learned that it was back in that same September 1948, when I had prayed to the Venerable KATERI for the first time, that Madame Bariteau too was invoking the aid of KATERI to obtain a certain house in which to start a nursing home. She even planted medals of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, St. Joseph, St. Jude and KATERI on the grounds of the desired house. Having had it in mind to name it St. Jude Pavilion.

When THE MONTREAL ENSIGN published the news that Rome is willing to accept two miracles in place of the usual four for Kateri's beatification, Mrs. Bariteau promptly decided to pay KATERI a visit that very day, asking her to find a more suitable larger house to accomodate her four guests and as many more as she could handle in future.

She had been searching for months for this; less than six weeks later the above-mentioned larger house on the very next street became Mrs. Bariteau's. In fulfillment of one of her many generous promises of thanksgiving, Mrs. Bariteau named the house in honor of KATERI.

And so it was that just a year and a week after KATERI PAVILION opened, I, an Indian and namesake of the Mohawk Maiden was admitted.

No one expected me to live, but with the determined, prayerful nursing care of Madame Bariteau and her nurses I gradually regained my strenght after much pain and suffering. By the time the Pavilion's second anniversary came round ^{Nov. 19} I was sitting up in a walking-chair and present at the first Mass ever offered in the Pavilion!

The celebrant of the Mass was Father Henri Bechard, S. J., from Caughnawaga, vice-postulator of the Cause of Ven. Kateri Tekakwitha, whose Relic Father brought with him for veneration by the patients and all here. Behold, I would not go to KATERI when I was well and able, but when I finally got round to asking her help, she not only took me into her very own Pavilion, healed me, and sent her Relic to me as well! With the added privilege of Holy Mass and Holy Communion. How wonderful, loving, and merciful is God and His Saints!

For I also want to repeat publicly my grateful thanks to St. Joseph and his apostle Frere Andre, that I regained complete use of my legs for the first time in over two years, following a visit to St. Joseph's Oratory last March 12th, feast of St. Francis Xavier, whose aid I had also invoked.

And now that I am well and able to walk again, with my trusty white cane of the blind to lead me, I am returning to live in Caughnawaga, close to the Mission Church of St. Francis Xavier, wherein are my beloved KATERI'S Relics. "The Closed Circle" would you say?

I hope my lengthy account will help and inspire others to persevere and have ~~confidence~~ ^{confidence} in praying the Ven. KATERI'S intercession with God in all their difficulties, especially in asking for miracles that will hasten her Beatification.

Perhaps it would be of interest also, to include in this account that ever since my dream-vision I have been filled with an unusual melody that I can never forget. I sing it over and over to myself with words that came to me in my mind within fifteen minutes and that I have written down.

I feel it is a gift of God, for I continue to compose melodies and words, and I never could before. With the help of God and the Fathers at the Mission, I have made a tape-recording of the above-mentioned melody. I hope it may be the beginning of a means of earning my living, for I have only my Blind Pension and I do not want to be a burden to others, please God.

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