



*See p. 11*

# The Jesuit

SPRING 1966

BUFFALO PROVINCE





## *The Saintly New York State Indian — The Lily of the Mohawks*



*Kateri Tekakwitha*

The Buffalo Province has a special honor: it is the only Province of the Society of Jesus in the United States that can claim three canonized martyr saints and one Venerable Indian Maiden, the proud product of their Indian Mission. The Jesuit Martyrs are St. Isaac Jogues (1646), Jesuit priest, ambassador of peace and missionary, St. Rene Goupil (1642), Jesuit brother and mission helper to Fr. Jogues and St. John Lalande, Jesuit donee and lay missionary who accompanied Fr. Jogues on his last mission and was martyred with him in 1646. The Venerable is the Lily of the Mohawks, Kateri Tekakwitha, who was born at Ossernenon, now Auriesville, N. Y., in 1656, just ten years after these martyrdoms in this same village. She was the most fruitful seed

of the blood of these martyrs. The chapel in the new Provincial Residence at Syracuse, N. Y., opened in late August, 1965, is named: The Jesuit Martyrs of New York State, and the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary memorialize the glory of the three martyrs and the Lily of the Mohawks.

Kateri was born at Ossernenon in 1656, her mother a Christian Algonquin who had been brought to the Lower Castle as a captive. The plague of 1660 had taken her father, a Mohawk chief of the Turtle Clan, her mother, and her brother. The little girl survived but with marked disfigurement and weakness of sight. She was adopted by an uncle and aunt. After peace was established between the Iroquois and the French and the return of the missionaries to Mohawk country, Kateri was baptized at the age of twenty, on Easter Sunday, 1676, seemingly a symbol of the resurrection of her people. But the joy of the convert and of this mission was short-lived.

First clash came with her uncle who wanted her to get married. Drunkards and libertines insulted her and children threw mud as she passed on her way to and from the mission chapel. The final blow came when her aunt accused her of trying to win the affections of the uncle. This treachery of her relatives decided her to flee to the haven of Caughnawaga in Canada.

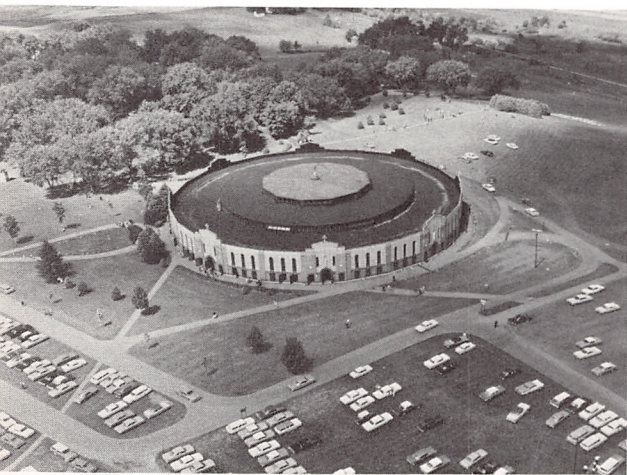
Kateri found peace among the Mohawks along the St. Lawrence near Montreal after a hazardous escape. There she led an exemplary and most edifying life, so much so that after her death (April 17, 1680) a few years later—she was only 24 at the time—Tekakwitha was known by her tribe as the “Lily of the Mohawks,” and the “Fairest Flower that ever Bloomed Among True Men.”

So it was that the seed whence sprang the *Lily of the Mohawks* was planted at Ossernenon, where she was born, now the National Shrine of the North American Mar-



tyrs. The *flowering* of the *Lily* came between 1667 and 1677 at Caughnawaga village on the north bank of the Mohawk, today the site of Tekakwitha Friary, Fonda, N. Y., the place of her spiritual re-birth through Baptism. The *full bloom* of the *Lily* was at the Indian reservation of Caughnawaga in Canada, today the site of the Mission of St. Francis Xavier, where the Lily was plucked from this life and transplanted to Heaven. Here her relics are kept in a sealed case, among her own descendants in this Indian village.

The Cause of Kateri dates back to the 1800's when the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore petitioned the Holy See to institute the process for the beatification of Kateri. At that time her cause was coupled with that of the North American Jesuit Martyrs. After the canonization of the Martyrs, the separate Cause of Tekakwitha was instituted May 22, 1931. The testimonies taken in 1931-32 along with the report of the findings were signed and carried to Rome. Quickly approving the findings, Rome asked that the Bishop of Albany, Bishop Gibbons, who was the then postulator of the Cause in America make a further



*The National Shrine of the North American Martyrs at Auriesville, New York—the birthplace of Kateri.*



*Father William J. Schlaerth, S.J., the author of this article, is the Vice-postulator of the Cause for Beatification of Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha. He is presently stationed at the new Provincial Residence in Syracuse.*

examination to show that there was no premature devotion or cultus in the case. This was done with success in July, 1932 when the Bishop visited her grave and village at Caughnawaga. The Indians made Bishop Gibbons a chief of their people.

But the task of scrutinizing the documents consumed six years, and finally in June, 1938, the Historical Section of the Congregation of Rites declared that they were complete, genuine, and trustworthy—that they established Kateri's reputation for holiness and a solid basis for final judgment that her virtues were heroic. On May 20, 1930, Pope Pius XII approved the Introduction of her Cause and the stage was set for the discussion of her virtues. Finally at Rome, January 3, 1943, a decree approved by Pope Pius declared heroic the virtues of Kateri and gave her the title of "Venerable." There followed several Apostolic Processes,—one session from 1943-45 and another from 1955-56.

In the Public Consistory which Pope John XXIII called on January 10, 1961, in the Basilica of St. Peter's, Tekakwitha was honored by having the Dean of the Consis-



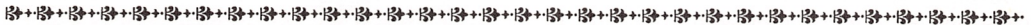
torial Advocates petition His Holiness to hasten the day when this white flower of the Mohawks might be elevated to the title of "Blessed." The following year began the Apostolic Processes for miracles in Rome which have continued intermittently.

Finally before the end of Vatican Council II in October, 1965, the hierarchy of Canada,—including 2 Cardinals, 16 Archbishops, 4 Exarchs, and 61 Bishops, signed a petition asking that the Holy Father beatify Kateri either before the end of the Council or sometime in the immediate future. Cardinal Leger of Quebec presented the request in the name of the other Canadian Bishops. The Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Cicognani stated in his gracious response that the Holy Father was, indeed, deeply interested in this Cause that would affect North and South America and has strongly recommended it to the competent Congregation of Rites.



*Indian maidens of today visit Auriesville and the outdoor statue of their saintly ancestor.*

Meanwhile the devotees of Kateri everywhere have continued to storm heaven with their prayers that the Lily of the Mohawks, marvelous Indian maiden of Auriesville in the Buffalo Province, who "dared to be different" in her chaotic time, whose life Pope Pius XI said is a "miracle" may soon be offered to our America, Canada, and to long-suffering peoples everywhere, as a *model* as well as a *marvel*.



## HOW TO FOSTER VOCATIONS IN YOUR OWN HOME



(a) Always speak respectfully of the priesthood, sisterhood and brotherhood.

(b) Use every opportunity to impress upon your children the dignity of the priesthood.

(3) Use every opportunity to impress upon your children the sublimity of a vocation to the sisterhood or brotherhood.

(d) If at all possible, receive Holy Communion daily.

(e) The very best sermon is good example.

(f) If you go to Communion daily, so will your children.

(g) There is no better way to foster vocations than by having your children associate intimately and daily with the Priest of the New Law—Jesus Christ.

(h) Have some Catholic literature available.

(i) Suggestions help—parents do not hesitate to suggest law, medicine, teaching et al. Why not the priesthood, sisterhood and brotherhood?

FROM SERRA INTERNATIONAL



... FROM THE MISSIONS TO THE PROVINCE—



Most Reverend Vincent I. Kennally, S.J., D.D., Bishop of the Caroline and Marshall Islands, celebrated a special Mass of Thanksgiving for his fifty years as a Jesuit in the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City in December. We extend to our bishop every good wish and many prayers on this happy occasion.



MISSION EXHIBIT

During three weeks in October, the Jesuit missions in the Caroline and Marshall Islands were featured in a special public display in the Erie County Savings Bank in downtown Buffalo. Many visitors studied with keen interest the native paintings, story boards, shells, carvings, grass skirts, pictures, and color slides from these islands. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the 1200 square foot display area were Mr. Harlan J. Swift, President of the bank, Very Reverend Thomas D. McMahon, S.J., Vice-provincial of the Buffalo Province, Brother Thomas J. Casey, S.J., who planned the display for THE JESUIT BUREAU, and Mrs. Eleanor R. Hoolihan, publicity consultant for the Bureau.

