

# IMMACULATA

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# Land of Martyrs and

VENERABLE KATERI TEKAKWITHA was born in Ossernenon, now known as Auriesville, N.Y. in 1656, where the Shrine of the North American Martyrs is located. This is the sacred ground where the first Religious Brother, Rene Goupil, gave his life for the faith. He was captured along with Father Isaac Jogues, S.J. Both were tortured and finally became slaves of the Mohawks. The Indians killed Brother Rene when they saw him make the Sign of the Cross over the head of a youngster.

Through the help of the Dutch Father Jogues escaped. Several years later he came back again with the layman, John Lalonde, to evangelize the Indians. They were bludgeoned to death by some Indians that thought they were dealing in "black magic" because of a box that had sacred vestments and other holy objects. St. Isaac Jogues, St. Rene Goupil, and St. John Lalonde were canonized by Pope Pius XI on June 29, 1930.

Auriesville is an impressive sight. There is a spiritual atmosphere about this holy place. It is especially peaceful during the weekdays when one can realize how close you can feel to God's great saints. The director of the Shrine

is Father Thomas F. Egan, S.J., a native of Amsterdam, N.Y. Before his appointment he was an army chaplain for nine years.

There is a large, new cafeteria with huge picture windows allowing you to overlook the scenic beauty of the area. If you look far across the Mohawk River you'll see the little town of Fonda with its steeped church of St. Peter's where Tekakwitha walked for instructions to the faith. The Mohawks had settled on the north side of the river, on a hill just west of present Fonda, N.Y. High above the waters of Cuyadutta Creek, near the Mohawk River, they built a village fortified by a double stockade. It was called Caughnawaga, "Laughing Waters."

Caughnawaga was the land of the Mohawk Indians during the year 1666/7-1693. The small bark mission was first built by the redman for Father Boniface, S.J. Father de Lamberville was the successor of Father Boniface. Caughnawaga was destroyed the year 1693 by the French soldiers and Canadian Indians, and today it is known as Fonda.

This is the place where the "Lily of the Mohawks"



Left: Concelebrating Mass in the Colosseum of the North American Martyrs shrine, Auriesville, N.Y. The interior resembles an Indian stockade. The principal celebrant is Fr. Michael Jacobs, S.J., Mohawk Indian. The Vice-postulator of the cause of Kateri Tekakwitha, Fr. Joseph McBride, S.J. is on the far right. Right: Mary-Eunice dressed in her role of the Indian Princess, Kateri Tekakwitha, visits the late Fr. Thomas Grassman, O.F.M.Conv. at St. Peter's church and museum in Fonda, N.Y. where Kateri was baptized.



# Saints

By  
Mary-Eunice

was given the baptismal name of "Kateri" in 1676, as she received the Holy Spirit into her soul. Venerable Tekakwitha was only one of the Indians to be given their faith at the little mission. There were many. It was also the place where many would eventually go to their death because of their conversions.

She endured much scorn and ridicule, was threatened with death if she went near St. Peter's Chapel again. Finally Father James de Lamberville, S.J. arranged that she should be taken to Canada where she died in the land of the "praying Indian." The Vatican on January 3, 1943 issued a decree approved by His Holiness Pope Pius XII declaring the heroic virtues of the Servant of God, Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.

## Where Indian Village Stood

A stone monument was erected and blessed to the memory of the Mohawk Princess, now a "Princess of Heaven," on the site of old Caughnawaga where once stood St. Peter's Chapel. These facts are made known by the writings on the bronze tablet of the stone monument erected by the Conventual Franciscan Friars who are in charge of St. Peter's Church and the site of the once Indian village.

The lower section of the property slopes south towards the Mohawk River. At a point on this highway, about one-half mile west of Fonda, N.Y. stands the Tekakwitha Friary, the residence of the Franciscans. Within the Friary is a chapel which may be visited by the faithful during the winter when the large St. Peter Chapel is closed. In 1938, with the consent of the Bishop, the Franciscans converted the upper section of a large barn, standing near the Tekakwitha Friary, into a public chapel. It was considered proper that this second chapel on the Tekakwitha property should bear the name St. Peter as did the first little bark chapel where Kateri was baptized. Holy Mass is celebrated daily, either in the Friary Chapel or St. Peter's Chapel according to the season of the year, also special prayers are requested each day to obtain, if possible, the Sainthood of "The Lily of the Mohawks."

Rev. Thomas Grassman, O.F.M.Conv. was appointed to the work at St. Peter's in the 1940's. He was to spend many years of solitude and study on historical research, to help prove that the actual position of the Caughnawaga village for the years 1666/7-1693 was authentic. In 1950 it was established by excavations when the entire double



Mary-Eunice stands before one of numerous historic landmarks in the land of martyrs and saints.

lines of the stockade posts of this Mohawk village were discovered and recorded. Excavations, continued yearly since 1950, have uncovered evidence of the long bark houses of the Mohawks within the stockaded areas. Today painted stakes mark the exact position and dimension of each house. In the field, east of the stone monuments,



Statue of St. Rene Goupil, one of the Jesuit martyrs, teaching an Indian child. In this area of the Auriesville Shrine, called the Sacred Ravine, Father Jogues hid the body of Goupil after the latter was killed in 1642.



stand the Stations of the Cross in great simplicity. From the point near the 14th Station is a breathtaking view of the Mohawk Valley.

It was in April, 1947 that work started on the ground floor under St. Peter's Chapel to provide a suitable place for a much needed museum and assembly hall. The Mohawk-Caughnawaga Museum came into existence on September 25, 1953. The museum serves both as a repository for the preservation of historical material of the Mohawk Valley Indians and colonial settlers as well. Here the material is studied and correlated. It is an excellent place of study for students and collectors.\*

Scholars will ever be grateful to Rev. Thomas Grassman, as it was due to his excavations that new light was cast on Indian social life and customs, plus their relations with our early American forefathers. He wrote *THE MOHAWK INDIANS AND THEIR VALLEY*, and among his many writings as special adviser on Indians to the *DICTIONARY OF CANADIAN BIOGRAPHY*, are sixteen biographies. He was awarded a fellowship by the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences for "outstanding contributions to Northeastern archaeology and colonial history." After 50 years of dedicated priesthood, in October, 1970, Father Thomas slipped quietly into eternity, leaving a legacy of rich historical data. Rev. Manus McGettigan, O.F.M.Conv. was appointed his successor and took over as pastor.

Father McGettigan deeply appreciated the efforts of Fr. Grassman, but was concerned that not enough people seemed to know about this historic place. He felt that to get more visitors, efforts had to be made to make St. Peter's a place for tourists. He had plans drawn up for some very practical changes, a small outdoor theatre, with a refreshment area, plus a gift shop.

However, before the plans could be put into action, tragedy struck. Both Father Manus McGettigan, O.F.M. Conv. and Rev. Luke C. Ziegler, O.F.M.Conv, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Tribes Hill, N.Y., were killed in a two car head-on crash in October, 1971. Father McGettigan joined Father Thomas Grassman in his mortal rest in the Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine Cemetery at Fonda, N.Y.

It is a prayerful hope of many friends and people in that area that the plans of Fr. Manus will some day be carried out. More people will then be inspired by the many sacrifices that were made there by dedicated religious and by the Indians who became Christian so many years ago, and where the Venerable Kateri accepted the Holy Spirit into her virgin soul.

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\*The Museum is a non-profit corporation, dependent upon free-will offerings for support. Those wishing to know more about the museum may write to: The Mohawk Caughnawaga Museum, Box 6, R.D. 1, Fonda, N.Y. 12068



Four-hundredth Anniversary of the . . .

# Heroic 19

THE FOUR-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY of the martyrdom of the 19 Dutch priests and religious at Gorkum is celebrated this year on July 9. It is a providential anniversary for these times are similar to theirs in many respects. The Blessed Sacrament is being "handled" by certain theologians and novelty-loving liturgists with anything but the respect which is its due. The Holy Father had to reiterate the traditional teachings about the Eucharist not too long ago in his Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*. And now the novelty of Communion-in-the-hand is being pressed which will open the door to every kind of disrespect and sacrilege.\*

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\*The craze of distribution of Holy Communion in the hand has increased tremendously the possibility of profanation and disrespect. Aside from the greater possibility of particles of the Sacred Host dropping to the ground, it was reported and documented in *PRO MUNDI VITA*, published in Zurich, Switzerland that one young man took a consecrated host to a restaurant and cut it to pieces to see if he could "draw blood." He then threw the Sacred Particles in the lavatory basin. A laundry found a number of hosts in a boy's trousers sent in for cleaning. In Holland some children were mounting hosts to boards much like mounting butterflies. Over 200 hosts were thus found. Who knows how many hosts are sold each day to be used in the blasphemous Black Mass, especially in these times with so much devil worship.