

# GLORIOUS NEWS FOR AMERICA

*Pope John Paul II announced recently from Vatican City, Italy, that on June 22, 1980, he will confer the title of "Blessed" on Kateri Tekakwitha, Mohawk Indian maiden, placing her one step from sainthood.*

A blessing has been conferred upon America with the proclamation that Kateri Tekakwitha will be beatified on June 22, 1980. The glorious news that she is now close to joining the saints spreads joy throughout our land.

Born in strife at Ossernenon (near Auriesville, New York) in 1656, her Mohawk Indian father and Algonquin mother died in a smallpox epidemic when Kateri was just a little child. Though this same epidemic left her with weakened eyes and scars of the disease, her beautiful spirit prevailed over all.

She was baptized into the Christian faith on Easter Sunday, 1676, in Caughnawaga (Fonda, New York). Throughout her short life, her love for God and people grew. Shortly after her death in 1680 at a Christian Indian settlement near Montreal, Canada, where she had fled to

escape religious persecution, her own people began to call her "The Lily of the Mohawks." Later, she became known to them as a "lady of quality who put things in order."

God has made her presence felt in the Mohawk Valley of her birth and amongst her Indian people ever since.

Blessed Kateri's life has significance to environmentalists. Hers were the people of the soil who loved nature and respected all things that lived and grew on the land. Three hundred years later, we look to Kateri to help us uplift our minds and hearts to God and for renewed awareness of all the environment. America will do well to remember and tell her story.

For more information about Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, you are invited to write to any of the following:

Rev. Joseph S. McBride, S.J.  
Vice Postulator, U.S.A.  
Kateri Tekakwitha League  
Auriesville, New York 12016

Rev. Henri Hechard, S.J.  
Vice Postulator, Canada  
Centre Kateri, C.P. 70  
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Rev. Thomas F. Egan, S.J.  
Director, National Shrine of  
the North American Martyrs  
Auriesville, New York 12016

Rev. Ronald Schultz, OFM Conv.  
Director, The Fonda Natinal Shrine  
of Kateri Tekakwitha  
Fonda, New York 12068

Monsignor Paul A. Lenz, Exec. Dir.  
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2021 H Street, N.W.  
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Thomas B. Constantino  
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Amsterdam, New York 12010



## Candidate For Sainthood

Unveiled in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral Tuesday was this statue of Kateri Tekakwitha, daughter of a Mohawk chief and Algonquin mother, expected to be raised to the title of blessed June 22. Born near Auriesville, N.Y. in 1656.

### Next American saint

Pope John Paul II has approved the beatification of Kateri Tekakwitha, the American Indian known as the "Lily of the Mohawks" born in Auriesville, N.Y., in 1656. The beatification is expected to take place June 22 in Rome.





# Beatification means much for our valley

The beatification of the Mohawk Indian maiden, Kateri Tekakwitha, two months from now when Pope John Paul II confers the title of blessed upon her, bodes many good things for this section of the Mohawk Valley where she was born and lived most of her short life.

Kateri was born in 1656 in the Mohawk Indian village of Ossernenon, within a stone's throw of the site of the present Auriesville Shrine of North American Martyrs just west of Amsterdam. She was baptized as a Christian at the Mohawk Indian village of Caughnawaga just west of Fonda on Easter Sunday 1676 by a mission priest.

When she entered the chapel that Sunday she was simply Tekakwitha, a Mohawk word meaning "one who puts things in order." When the ceremony

was completed the surname Kateri (Catherine) had been added.

Being a Christian in a non-Christian Indian community made life very dangerous and difficult, and with resentment growing, she escaped and completed a long and arduous 200-mile journey on foot to join Christian Indians in the St. Lawrence Valley. There, in 1680, her strength rapidly failed and she died at the age of 24.

Miraculous cures have been attributed by the faithful to her intercession, and her case for possible sainthood was initiated in

1923. Hundreds of documents commemorating her holiness and evidence of her intercession were accumulated and translated, and "the cause" was instituted in 1931. In 1943, a decree was issued by Pope Pius XII declaring "heroic the virtues of the servant of God, the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha.

Now 37 years later will occur her beatification, which is the final step before canonization as a saint at some future time.

To the faithful who have worked and prayed long and hard, their prayers

have been answered and their efforts rewarded.

The significance for all the people in our historic and picturesque section of the Mohawk Valley is that this recognition of the virtues Kateri Tekakwitha by the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church will also bring into focus worldwide recognition of the Valley of the Mohawks.

The Shrine of North American Martyrs at Auriesville and the Tekakwitha Shrine, just west of Fonda, which are already host to more than 100,000 visitors annually, will become centers of increased interest and pilgrimage and tourism activity.

It seems so very fitting that courage, fidelity and personal sacrifice from the earliest part of our heritage is re-emerging from the past to enhance the present.

## Editorial Opinion

4—The Recorder, Amsterdam, N.Y. Fri., April 18, 1980

## John Paul to Beatify 'Lily of the Mohawks'

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It is believed the beatifications will take place in Rome June 22.

The other four include two Canadians, Bishop Francis de Montmorency-Laval, first bishop of Quebec, and Sister Marie of the Incarnation (Marie Guyard), foundress of the Canadian Ursuline nuns.

They also include Brazilian Jesuit Father Jose de Anchieta and a Guatemalan layman, Pedro de San Jose Betancur.

According to the sources, the pope decided on the beatifications on March 15, though they had not yet been publicly announced by April 11.

**KATERI** Tekakwitha, daughter of a Mohawk father and Algonquin mother, was born in 1656 in the Indian village of Ossernenon, (Auriesville, N.Y.), and died in 1680 at Caughnawaga in Canada. She converted to Christianity in 1676 and took a private vow of virginity in 1679, a year before her death.

By the time she died, although she was only 24, she was already widely known for her austerity and charity.

This member of the Iroquois nation was the first American Indian proposed

for canonization. She was declared venerable in 1943.

An unusual aspect of the new beatifications, a knowledgeable source said, is that "the pope is making a major exception to the present law of the church" in approving the five beatification causes.

"Their beatification shall be based," the source said, "...not on the specific study of one or two spectacular events but only on the well established belief that miracles have been obtained through their intercession."

**THIS MEANS** that the church "is accepting their

reputation among the people of God as a deciding factor in their being honored," the source added.

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It's Official!

## Kateri to Be Beatified

By John Dash

Several weeks after it was announced in the Courier-Journal that rumors were circulating in Rome that the Vatican had decided to proceed with the canonization process for Kateri Tekakwitha, Cardinal Terence Cooke formally announced that a date had been set to "beatify" the "Lily of the Mohawks," on June 22.

As the 300th anniversary of Venerable Kateri's death (April 17) approached, rumors again began to circulate in Montreal, Albany and Washington, D.C., that the Vatican had set a date, according to Father Joseph McBride, U.S. vice postulator for the cause. As it happened, some Canadian prelates, privy to the Vatican decision, announced the news to their parishioners prior to Cardinal Cooke's declaration, Father McBride said.

Beatification is the second in the Church's three-phase process for declaring a person a saint. In the first phase the Church asserts that because of an individual's extraordinary virtue, he or she is worthy of adulation or veneration. In the second, the Church asserts her certainty that the individual is among the blessed. In the third, the individual is proclaimed a saint.



KATERI TEKAKWITHA



## Rome Will Beatify Kateri Tekakwitha

NEW YORK (AP) — The title of "Blessed" — a formal step in the Roman Catholic church process of declaring sainthood — will be given an American Indian woman who "led a life of goodness" during the 17th century, the Vatican announced Monday.

Pope John Paul II's beatification of Kateri Tekakwitha, the daughter of an Algonquin mother and a Mohawk chief, will take place June 22 in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

It will be the first time a North American Indian, or North American lay woman, has been given the religious honor.

Miss Tekakwitha was born in about 1656 in Auriesville, N.Y., and died in 1680, according to the Archdiocese of New York. After a smallpox epidemic claimed her parents' and brother's lives and left her scarred and with poor eyesight, she was raised by an uncle.

The archdiocese said the girl first saw Jesuit missionaries in 1667 and "was deeply impressed by them but was too shy and possibly fearful of her relatives to approach them."

In 1676, she approached a Jesuit

priest "who instructed her for a year and baptized her on April 5, 1676, when she took the name Kateri or Katherine," according to the archdiocese.

The archdiocese said she that she tried to lead a Christian life in her Mohawk village "which was crude, violent and, in many ways, degenerate. ... To avoid greater problems and to be able to lead a Christian life, she walked 200 miles to Sault St. Louis (near Montreal) in October 1677."

There, the woman "led a life of goodness based on the Gospels," the church said. "This took the form of a strong prayer life, extraordinary service to those in need in the Indian community and a decision not to marry which, for an Indian girl at the time, was to leave herself almost a helpless beggar."

The archdiocese said the woman's death on April 17, 1680, at age 24, brought her recognition by the Indian and French communities in the area "for her extraordinary generosity and Christian example."

In 1943, Miss Tekakwitha was declared "venerable," the church's first step toward sainthood.



### Blessed event

Janice Whitman, 9, of the Casa Blanca Indian Dancers forms a "bridge" with her partner at St. Francis Xavier Church. Three Indian choirs and two groups of dancers performed Sunday at the Roman Catholic church, where Phoenix Bishop James S. Rausch dedicated a statue of

Kateri Tekakwitha, a North American Indian, called the "The Lily of the DeGrazia made the 3-foot-high statue. The archdiocese has approved the beatification of the title "Blessed" at June 22.

## Area priests to see Kateri rites in Rome

AURIESVILLE — The Rev. Joseph McBride of the Auriesville Shrine, U.S. vice postulator of the cause of Kateri, and the Rev. Donald Schultz, director of the Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine near Fonda, plan to attend the Kateri Tekakwitha beatification ceremonies in Rome on June 22.

The ceremonies will be conducted by Pope John Paul II at St. Peter's Basilica.

"If we could get enough people to pray hard enough, we knew it would work out," he said.

According to Father McBride, Kateri's heroism resulted from the persecution she faced unwaveringly as a member of a pagan culture. He described Kateri's beatification as a great impetus to push for canonization and an inspiration to all.

## Pope Approves Beatification Of 'Lily of the Mohawks'

By JERRY FILTEAU  
VATICAN CITY (NC) — Pope John Paul II has approved the beatification of Kateri Tekakwitha, the U.S. Indian known as the "Lily of the Mohawks," and of four other North and South Americans, NC News Service learned from sources in Rome.

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The other four include two Canadians, Bishop

Francis de Montmorency-Laval, first bishop of Quebec, and Sister Marie of the Incarnation (Marie Gyart), foundress of the Canadian Ursuline nuns.

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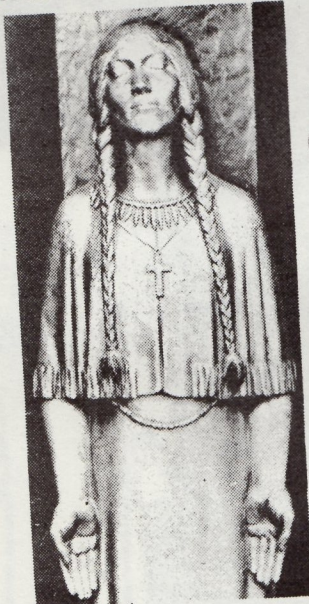
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KATERI TEKAKWITHA

## Beatification for 'Lily of Mohawks'

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Wednesday, April 16, 1980

## 'Lily of the Mohawks' to be elevated by Pope

AURIESVILLE — In the 17th century, an American Indian woman walked 200 miles so she could lead a devout Christian life. Today, she is being considered for sainthood.

"She experienced what so many communities of native Americans have known even to this day — poverty, constant upheaval and the tragic effects of warfare," Cardinal Terence Cooke said yesterday in announcing her beatification outside St. Patrick's Cathedral.

June 22, Pope John Paul will confer the title of "blessed" — one step short of canonization — on Kateri Tekakwitha, who was known as the "Lily of the Mohawks," and died at age 24.

If she is canonized, she will join three other American saints — St. Frances Cabrini and St. Elizabeth Seton, both religious sisters, and St. John Neumann, a Philadelphia Bishop.

Kateri Tekakwitha was born in what is now Auriesville, the site of the murders of the Rev. Isaac Jogues and seven other French missionaries.

She was the daughter of a Mohawk chief and an Algonquin

mother who had been raised as a Christian.

When she was 4, an outbreak of smallpox ravaged her village and took the lives of her mother, father and brother. She, herself, was left with poor eyesight and a scarred face.

She was adopted by her father's brother, who became chief. Despite his opposition, she became a Catholic in 1676, when she was 19, and took the name Kateri, or Katherine.



Kateri Tekakwitha



# The 'Lily of the Mohawks' And Others to Be Beatified

**By JERRY FILTEAU**  
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This means that the church "is accepting their reputation among the people of God as a deciding factor in their being honored," the source added.

Most of the church's most famous saints, before formal rules and investigation procedures

were established for canonization, came to be considered saints by popular belief.

Suspension of today's rules by a pope is rare but not unheard of. In the 1976 Holy Year, Pope Paul VI suspended requirements of a second authenticated miracle before proclaiming a saint.

The four persons to be beatified along with Kateri Tekakwitha are all considered major figures in the early history of the church in the Americas, even though all were born in Europe.

Bishop Laval, considered the founder of the church in Canada, was born in the Diocese of Chartres, France, in 1623 and died in Quebec in 1708 at the age of 85.

In 1658, 11 years after his ordination, he was named first apostolic vicar of the then French colony of Canada. In 1670, the Holy See raised the vicariate in rank, making it the Diocese of Quebec, and four years later he was named its first bishop.

He remained its bishop until 1684, when he was forced to retire because of health. He gained a reputation for exceptional virtue and humility as he lived in retirement at the Quebec seminary.

He was declared a servant of God in 1960.

Mother Marie of the Incarnation (1599-1672) was born in Tours, France, and died in Quebec. Like U.S. St. Elizabeth Seton, she was a mother and widow when she became a nun.

She was married at the age of 17 to Claude Martin, who died two years later. Their only child, also named Claude, later became a Benedictine.

For several years she was housekeeper for her sister. But she lived an intense spiritual life, had mystical experiences and in 1631 she joined the Ursulines in Tours, leaving her 12-year-old son in her sister's care.

At her spiritual director's insistence, she wrote two accounts of her spiritual life (1633 and 1654) which recount her mystical experiences.

In 1639, as a result of a dream in 1635 that called her to a missionary vocation, she and two fellow Ursulines became the first women missionaries in the New World.

Her missionary work included

ed writing catechisms in Huron and Algonquian and a French-Algonquian dictionary. Her extensive correspondence with her son, a monk in France, is an important source of 17th-century Canadian history. The French historian, Bishop Jacques Benigne Bossuet, called her the "Teresa of the New World," in a reference to St. Teresa of Avila, the Spanish mystic.

She was declared venerable (a servant of God) in 1911.

Pedro de San Jose Betancur (1619-67) was born in the Canary Islands, where he worked as a shepherd before he set out in 1650 for Guatemala in hopes of becoming a missionary priest.

In 1653 he was admitted to a Jesuit school in Guatemala City, but could not cope with the studies.

He was invited to become a Franciscan brother but decided he should not join a religious

order and instead became a Franciscan tertiary, or member of a lay association affiliated with the Franciscans.

From the beginning of his life in Guatemala, Betancur actively engaged in lay apostolates, especially among the poor and sick. He himself was poor but managed to found a hospital, a school and several homes for the poor.

He inaugurated several religious customs among Guatemalan children that continue today, including the Christmas Eve practice of imitating St. Joseph searching for lodgings for Mary. Historians see this as the forerunner of the famous Christmas Eve posadas.

He was declared venerable in 1771. His cause lay dormant for nearly two centuries until it was revived in 1960.

Because of his gentleness, simplicity and poverty, he has been called the "St. Francis of the Americas."

Jesuit Father Jose de Anchieta (1534-97), known as "the apostle of Brazil," was also born in the Canary Islands.

He joined the Jesuits in Portugal in 1551 and two years later was sent to Brazil.

He was a linguist who wrote many catechetical and religious works in Tupi, one of the main native languages along the Brazilian coast.

THE EVANGELIST

## Kateri: What's her meaning to today's world?

By BRIAN BAKER  
Staff Writer

Why do we need more saints today? And, in particular, what is the significance of the beatification of an Indian maiden who lived 300 years ago?

Now that the initial excitement of Pope John Paul II's approval of the beatifications of Kateri Tekakwitha and four other North and South Americans has worn off, these questions might remain in the minds of some Catholics.

Rev. Thomas Egan, SJ, director of the Auriesville National Shrine of the North American Martyrs, admits as much. It used to be non-Catholics who most often asked about the purpose of saints, but today, Catholics, as well, wonder about their importance.

There might be less confusion if we stopped looking at someone like Kateri as an unapproachable, superhuman entity with a halo, the priest suggests. The key, he says, is to see a real human being whose faith helped overcome the obstacles all of us meet in daily living.

"We need saints to encourage us, to make us realize that following Christ in any age and in any circumstances is possible," according to Father Egan. "If Kateri could make such a spiritual advance with such little support even from friends and family, think of what we could do," he mused.

Kateri, like all saints, can serve as a model for Catholics of all ages, but especially for youths, Father Egan thinks.

"When Pope John Paul II addressed the youth at Madison Square Garden last year, he said that the whole purpose of Catholic education is to introduce them to Christ. They should get to know Him as well as they can; He has all the answers to what they're looking for."

"But has any young person been able to do that? Kateri certainly did. Her life was built around her love for Christ. She can be an example and a help to others," he said.

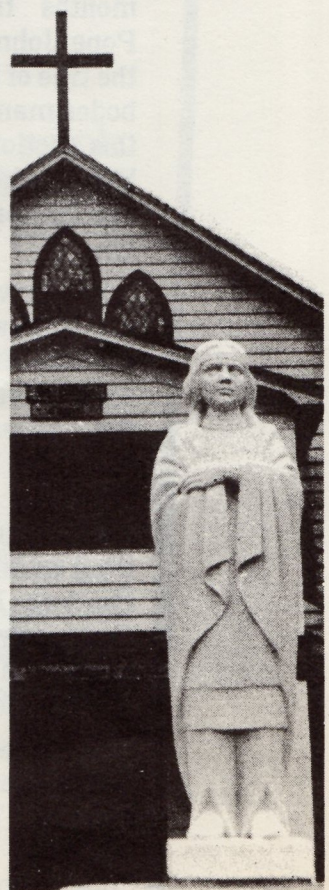
A victim of smallpox as a child and left partially blind and weak throughout her life, Kateri died at the age of 24. In the short span of her life, she was able to make herself "perfectly obedient" to Christ to demonstrate her love for Him, said Father Egan. She did so with considerable ridicule by others of her tribe. As well as being generous in her service of others, she was courageous and prayerful in the face of her adversity.

"Kateri had a great understanding of what Jesus did for her on the cross," said the priest.

The times have changed since the early missionary days in America when Christianity divided the Mohawk nation and Kateri felt the call to Catholicism. But some things never change.

"Everyone is still called to be holy, to live a life of dedication to Christ. She can help inspire us to a sense of personal purity in which we give ourselves over completely to the service of God."

Father Egan, who spoke with The Evangelist this



A view of St. Peter's Chapel and the Mohawk Caughnawaga museum at the Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine, Florida. A Mohawk Indian from upstate New York posed for the statue of Kateri.

week, had just returned from a two-week stay in Canada following unofficial reports of Kateri's beatification. Indians whom he visited at St. Regis Reservation and Caughnawaga were "jubilant" about the expected beatification, he said.

"These people have been praying all their lives for this to happen. Many of them were wondering if it ever would, and all of a sudden it did. The 37 years since her veneration isn't a long time in the history of the Church, but it's not a short time in a life."

Indians throughout the United States and Canada, said Father Egan, have been privately devoted to Kateri for years. For the most part, they are proud that the first evidence of heroic sanctity produced by missionary efforts in North America is one of their own people. They're hoping and praying that in the next few years, Kateri will take the final step towards sainthood.

One of the most devoted followers of Kateri is a Mohawk Indian woman from Liverpool, New York. Sarah Skanaieah Hassenplug (her Indian name is "Little Peacock") first heard about Kateri through stories her grandfather used to tell.

"I've known about her as long as I can remember. Her story has been passed down from generation to generation among my people," she said.

Sarah became fascinated with Kateri's life about nine years ago after she and her husband passed her shrine in Fonda. Now, she's a guide at the shrine. She was used as a model for a statue of Kateri in front of St. Peter's Chapel there, also.

"I feel fantastic about the news of her beatification. I've been praying, but I didn't think it would happen in my lifetime."

"The Mohawks have always thought of her as a saint," Sarah added. "But we are very happy that the Church has now formally recognized it."

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St. Paul, Minn.

## Kateri Tekakwitha To Be Beatified

NEW YORK (RNS) — Kateri Tekakwitha, the 17th century Mohawk Indian convert to Catholicism, will be beatified in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on June 22nd.

Terence Cardinal Cooke formally announced the Vatican's decision to honor Kateri with the title of "blessed" on April 15th from the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral before a bronze door that carries a statue of the Indian maiden.

Kateri will be the second native of New York state to receive this title. The first was Mother Elizabeth Seton in 1963, who subsequently was elevated to sainthood.

The decision to go forward with Kateri's process may have been made because 1980 is the 300th anniversary of her death — on April 17th — in the Christian Indian village of Sault St. Louis at

Caughnawaga, Quebec, near Montreal.

The announcement from the Vatican indicated that Pope John Paul II has also decided to go forward with the beatification of four other Catholic figures of the Western hemisphere. Two of them, both French-born, were also associated with the early days of the Catholic Church in Canada: Bishop Francis de Montmorency-Laval, first Bishop of Quebec, and Mother Marie of the Incarnation, foundress of the Canadian Ursuline nuns. The others are Fr. Joseph de Anchieta, S.J., of Brazil and Pedro de Betancur, a Guatemalan layman.

Born in 1656 at what is now Auriesville, N.Y., northwest of Albany, the Indian girl was named Kateri. She took Kateri or Katherine at her Baptism at the age of 19 by Jesuit missionaries.

(Continued on Page 7)

Monday, April 14, 1980

## Kateri will be beatified

AURIESVILLE — Kateri Tekakwitha will be beatified June 22 by Pope John Paul II at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, according to Rev. Joseph McBride, vice-postulator at the National Kateri Center at the Auriesville Shrine.

The step puts Kateri one level from sainthood and ennobles her to be known as the blessed Kateri. According to Rev. McBride, Kateri was declared venerable in 1943, which is the first step toward being canonized as a saint.

Kateri was born in Auriesville 10 years ago. She lived here 10 years and then moved with her family across the river to what is now the Fonda area, where she was subsequently baptized as a Christian.