



Quotes of Kateri (Catherine) Tekakwitha

We had known Kateri's companion invented to punish herself for her sins with willow branches and suggested this means of atonement to Kateri. Kateri would always say that it was not painful enough and exhorted her companion to hit her harder, although as I knew that the third hit would come blood. When they had come to a pause that they said the Rosary of the Holy Family and divided it with many pauses, which each pause they gave themselves five stripes more and at the end of their devotions they ceased to count the stripes. Then she had disclosed of the sentiments from her heart with these words, "My Jesus, I must suffer with you. I love you, but I have offended you. It is to satisfy your justice I am here. Discharge, my God, on me your anger." Sometimes she was not able to speak further, but with her eyes bathed in tears and finally she would often say, "I am extremely touched from the three nails that attached Our Lord to the Cross. They are a symbol of my sins." This they would do again every Sunday with prayers and penance in a cabin, where it was in the middle of the cemetery.

Kateri's love of God was that she consumed her life from repeating three times these words, "Jesus, I love you." This love gave her strength in her illness, work, harsh penance that she gave herself and finally when she had done an entire sacrifice with only a few hours to live. We had often said of her that she never lost sight of God, and especially in the forest, where she would give compensation for the exterior graces that were in the village and not in the forest. This we had said of her from admiration and we could not understand that she could be so attached to God.

Her devotion was constant and never capricious and also, her devotion was never falsely assumed. It was very difficult for her, because of her infirmities, to have her body assist with her desires. She would spend very long times in the chapel kneeling and rarely would support herself when she was weak. She had often repeated, "Who will teach me what is most agreeable to God, so I could do it?" She was exact in all the practices of devotion either small or of greater importance that were established in the Mission. She had particular practices of devotions that we saw and she had the promptness in leaving everything when the bell was rung for the prayers.

She had thought herself as the greatest sinner in the world. It was with this sentiment of humility that she had made all her confessions. The same fervour was especially evident every time she would receive Communion. She was sometimes asked, "Kateri, do you love Our Lord?" It was enough to see her immediately quite overcome. "Ah, my Father! Ah, my Father!", she would say and could say no more. Her desire was to be always united with God and not to be distracted from the people. This had made her love solitude more, but her desire was also to preserve herself in innocence from the horror of sin and the fear of displeasing God.

She was still more inspired on to this, because of an accident that happened to her at this time and almost had taken her from among us when we were just beginning to know her. One day she was cutting down a tree in the forest and it fell sooner than she had expected. Her hastiness had saved her from being hit from the trunk of the tree, but one of the branches fell on her as she fled and hit her head with such a force and she lost her senses. They thought at first that she was dead, but she had revived a little later and softly whispered, "My, Jesus! I thank you of having saved me from this accident." The only conclusion she had got from it was that God had saved her to do penance for her sins. This she declared to her dear companion, who was such a great part in her life.

Kateri asked where the women would sit in the chapel being built at the Sault and her companion replied and showed where she thought their place would be. With a sigh Kateri replied, "As it is true, it is not in this material

temple God most loves to dwell. It is in us God wants to take up His dwelling place. Our souls are the temples most agreeable to God. But the miserable being I am, how many times having I forced God to abandon my soul in where God should reign alone! I deserve to be punished for my ingratitude and forever excluded from this temple here rising to His glory.” These were the sentiments of profound humility, which were said with tears and words of grace.

Her adopted sister had acted as the mistress of the cabin and pretended through right of age to have authority over her, because she regarded her younger sister in a worldly manner. She had tried to persuade her to marry for the purpose, which she could be to her than the own good of Kateri. This courageous virgin was not offended, but she eluded the first attempt and immediately had sought me to complain a little of her sister, which was to recount the entire affair. Then I had said, “Kateri, you are the judge in this matter. It depends on you alone and think well, because it is a concern of a great moment.” She had immediately replied and without hesitation, “Ah, my Father! I will not marry. I do not like men and have the last aversion to marriage. The thing is not possible.” And as to have ascertained and to try her more, which I had continued with the strong reasons that her sister presented to her. She had assured me with great firmness in her reply. She said, “The poverty I am threatened with does not scare me, because so little is needed to give to the necessities of this miserable life and my labour could provide for it and I could always find some rags to cover me.” Then she returned to the cabin, but I had assured her that she was doing right. After she had returned to the cabin, her sister pressed her again about marriage and if she had thought of getting married. Kateri replied, “I have! And if you want me to have respect and love you as my sister, never speak to me like that anymore.” It is true that this woman did not want to speak of it again to Kateri, but she told Anastasia who had taken the place of a mother for the two of them. Anastasia had done all in her capability to change her decision, but she did not succeed any more than the other. They had separated and came immediately to me, Anastasia to complain of her daughter and Kateri of her mother. The younger reached me first and told me of the suffering caused from her mother and sister, who they had wanted her to marry and that she found it was not capable to obey them. To have relieve her of her suffering and settle the matter, which I had told her to take three more days to consider the subject. She should pray earnestly during that time and recommend her trouble to Our Lord, as I would unite with her in prayer. She should attach closely to whatever God inspired her after the three days. Although I had reminded her that she was her own mistress in an affair of this sort and the decision would always rest with her alone. Kateri agreed with this plan, but the Holy Spirit had influenced her strongly and in less than a quarter of an hour that she had come back to search for me. I was surprised to see her returning a moment after to tell me and all inflamed, which she could not live any longer in a situation of indecision from a choice that she had made a long time before. She said and while coming near me, “It is settled! It is not a matter to consider and my part has long before been taken. No, my Father! I can have no other spouse, but Jesus Christ. I have considered myself content to live in poverty and misery for His love.”

Mary Theresa was always trying to profit from the sentiments Kateri had communicated to her and from the beautiful example that was Kateri, which her companion had always before her eyes. Kateri would often say to herself, “Hey what!” And she would say, “If an innocent girl so conducts herself, what should not a sinner like myself do?”

I had wanted to take her on the hunt as to restore her health a little, where she would not be deprived of the good nourishment that she needed, but could not have in the village. The winter was long and staying that she would suffer through need of it, because during the winter that they lived only on corn. Kateri had only laughed at this and a moment later, which she had assumed that devout look when she would come to tell me of her spiritual desires. She had given me this reply and dignified of Tekakwitha, “Ah, my Father! It is true the body fares well in the forest, but the soul would languish there and dies of hunger. Whereas in the village, the body would suffer a little from not being so well nourished, but the soul is near to Our Lord and finds entire satisfaction. I have

abandoned this miserable body to hunger and any other misery so my soul could be content and have its usual nourishment.”

Once Kateri had asked Anastasia Tegonhatsihongo, which was the severest penance she considered to be the most pleasing sacrifice to Our Lord and to prove the love to Him. The other had answered, “My daughter, I know of nothing on earth more terrible than fire.” Kateri replied, “I myself, no more.” Kateri had said no more about it then, but in the evening when everyone went to sleep she spent a long time burning her legs with an iron. In this manner, she had declared herself the slave of her Saviour. Then she had presented herself at the door of the chapel in the darkness of the night and enduring her beautiful marks of the Cross, because to have offered what she had suffered for her dear Spouse in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.

About two or three months before her death, this generous girl had desired to attach herself even more to the Cross of her Saviour. She had gathered a large bundle of thorny branches, with big thorns that the points were very sharp, and brought with her and hid them in her cabin. When everyone was asleep, she scattered these thorny branches upon her mat and then slept on them and having only her blanket over her body. She had the strength not only to roll herself all night long upon these thorns that pierced so deeply into her flesh, but also to do this for the following three nights. It had left her so haggard and exhausted, which her face resembled that of a dead person. She had sought me immediately and approached me with these words, “Ah, my Father! I have sinned.” Then she had told me of the entire affair and in my heart I admired her, but I was angry and blamed her for being not prudent. I had ordered her to throw these thorns into the fire to prevent her from renewing it and she did it with great submission.

Kateri’s beloved companion and some other women of the Holy Family, who they had for a about a year formed a small devotional band with Kateri and is still called the Sisters of Kateri, had greatly desired to be present when she died. They were obliged to go in search of wood for the following feast days, but without knowing whether to go or to remain with Kateri. They thought the right answer was to ask Kateri and soon after then that I had spoken to Kateri for them. She had enough influence in Heaven to have her death deferred on their behalf. Kateri said, “Let them go to the forest, they will see me die when they return.”

On Tuesday night and the last night of her life, which I had named Mary of Onondaga and Margaret Gagouithon. Margaret Gagouithon was younger than the other and the youngest member of the Holy Family, because she was not more than twenty-two years old. Margaret had sought me after the evening prayers for my permission that to go in the forest and to do some penance. This was to obtain a happy death for Kateri whom she was going to watch. This charity was surprising in a Native girl, because she had passed a full quarter of an hour in performing penance until she bled on behalf of Kateri. Then they had entered Kateri’s cabin and Kateri took hold of the arm of Margaret and whispered to her, “Approach here, my sister that I say a little word.” Kateri could scarcely talk. Then Kateri held tightly her arm and said, “Courage, my dear sister, continue with the same fervour you have already began so good.” Margaret had no less humility than fervour and replied that Kateri had not known her well and she, Margaret, was a miserable sinner. Again Kateri held tightly her arm and saying, “My sister, I know what I am saying, I also know where you come from and I assure you that what you are doing is well done and agreeable to Our Lord. Have a good courage, persevere constantly and pray for me at my death, so I could soon leave Purgatory. I shall aid you when I am in Paradise, be assured.”

The morning of Holy Wednesday that Kateri’s illness began to get worst. Her companion had believed she was about to give up her soul. She remained next to Kateri and was not able to leave. Although Kateri assured her companion to go work in her field and promised to send for her when it was time. It had happened like Kateri promised, which she sent for her companion at about ten o’clock in the morning. Mary Theresa Tegaiguenta had arrived in her cabin a short time before Extreme Unction was given. Kateri talked with her companion after

receiving the Sacrament. Then having difficulty speaking without being able to raise her voice and seeing her companion with tears, which Kateri had said her last parting salutation to her companion. Kateri said, "I am about to leave. I am going to die, remember always of what we have done together from when we knew each other. If you change, I will accuse you before the tribunal of God. Take courage, despise the discourse of those who have no Faith when they want to persuade you to marry, listen only to the Fathers. If you cannot serve God here, go to the Mission of Lorette. Never give up mortification. I will pray for you, I will assist you, I will love you in Heaven." After these last words, this blessed girl had lost her word when phlegm began to fall and would later take her away.

It was said that some time before her last illness she was digging a grave in the cemetery and together with some other women that to bury one of her small nephews. The conversation was turned to this burial ground, where each one should have a place, and they laughingly asked Kateri where was her place. She had said and pointing her finger to a certain place, "There it is!" After her death, Father Chauchetiere did all he could to persuade me to have her placed in the chapel, but to avoid such an unusual thing that I had her grave made in the cemetery and was the exact place that she had designated. Although I did not know of her prediction until two years after her burial.

On Wednesday April 24, 1680 that Kateri had appeared to the good Anastasia in the following manner. She had said, "One night after the public prayers and when everyone had gone to sleep, I had prayed alone a little while and then I went also to sleep. I scarcely had fallen asleep when I was awakened from a voice calling me and saying, 'My mother, rise up and look!' I had recognized Kateri's voice. Immediately, I sat up and turning to the side of the place, where she was calling me. I had seen her standing at the side of me. She had half of her body hidden until the belt. Her upper body was as bright as the sun and I saw only her face that was of an extraordinary beauty. She said, 'My mother, look well at the Cross I am carrying! Look, look, how beautiful the Cross is! Ah, how I loved the Cross on earth! Ah, how I love the Cross still in Paradise! How much I want all of our cabin to love and rely on the Cross as I did!' This was what she had said to me and at that instant she disappeared and left me with so full of joy. The Cross she carried in her hand was so beautiful and gave forth more brilliant light than all the rest, I have never seen anything so lovely and charming." The great affection Kateri had to the Cross and the manner that she appeared to her mother, which gave the thought of painting her with a Cross in her hand. It was the posture that was the best appropriate for her. The Cross was the source of all her happiness during her life.

Around that time, which Mary Theresa Tegaiguanta had reported an apparition. She said, "One morning and before dawn, someone had come to knock on the outside of my cabin and near the place where I was lying. This person said, 'Are you asleep?' I replied, No! This voice said, 'Good-bye! I have come to say good-bye. I am going to Heaven.' I had recognized Kateri's voice and went out at once to see her, but she was not there. I had heard Kateri's voice far in front saying, 'Good-bye!' But I had seen nothing. Kateri said, 'Go and tell the Father I am going to Heaven.' "

Another day Mary Theresa had another apparition. She said, "I was angry with my sister and the following night when I was in my cabin, someone came and seated on a mat near me. I saw the person covered in a blanket as Kateri did in her life and heard her say, 'You do not remember the good resolutions you made?'" The person reprimanded her for what she had done. Although she gave her some advices for her conduct and said many other things. Then someone sleeping next to her had awakened, which Kateri said no more and left. Mary Theresa heard her walking out and as though she was a living person, and immediately Mary Theresa repented her fault.