

Montreal Historical Review (St. Lawrence)

Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha Seaway



Shrine at Caughnawaga, P.Q., Canada

This old mission was first established for Iroquois converts in 1668 at Laprairie, fifteen miles down the river from here. During the next 50 years the mission moved four times, finally settling here on this site in 1717. It was then built as a fort to protect the Christian Iroquois from the pagan Iroquois and was called "Fort St. Louis".

THE CHURCH

The first church stood about 125 years and was then torn down to be replaced by the present one in 1845.

Main Altar: Carved by Canadians in 1845. Note the two tabernacles one above the other.

Large Crucifix above the altar, was given by Indians of the reserve as a memorial to 35 of their men killed in the crash of the Quebec bridge in 1907.

Paintings above side altars were gifts of Charles X, the King of France, about the year 1825.

Ceiling was painted between 1924 and 1928 by an Italian artist, Guido Nincheri.

Stations of the Cross: note the wording on them written in Iroquois.

SACRISTY

Note steel bars with cornstalk design in windows.

The Altar in the Sacristy and the four brass candlesticks doubtless were gifts of Louis XIV, the King of France, to the Iroquois Mission then at Laprairie.

MUSEUM

The Desk: said to have been used at the mission here in 1722 by Father Charlevoix. He wrote one of the first histories of Canada, then called "New France", a whole chapter of which is dedicated to Kateri.

Wampum Belt: oldest known. Wampum is the name for Indian money. Note the sign of the Cross in center. This belt was given by the Huron Christians to the new Iroquois converts to encourage them to remain faithful to their new religion in 1677, the year Kateri arrived at the Mission.

Monstrance: a fine example of the art period of Louis XIV, before which Kateri certainly prayed.

Crucifix carved in Ivory. It was a gift of Louis XIV in 1680 and arrived at the Mission just after Kateri's death.

Record Player: We have the privilege of having our choir sing all its hymns and Masses in the Iroquois language. These records were made by the choir a couple of years ago and are for sale in the store. If you would like to hear them, please ask the person in charge.

Relics (in box) of Kateri Tekakwitha, the Lily of the Mohawks. She was an Iroquois girl, born in 1656 at what is today Auriesville, 30 miles west of Albany, the capital of New York State. At the age of 20 she was baptized by missionaries and the next year escaped to join this Mission which was then six miles down the river at what is today Côte Ste. Catherine. Three years later she died at the age of 24 in 1680. Many favors followed her death. In 1941 she was declared **Venerable**. Two more miracles are needed for her Beatification, and three more after that for her Canonisation as a Saint. Her cenotaph is at Côte Ste. Catherine, though her bones, exhumed four years after her death, are now kept in the museum built in her honor. The **Painting of Kateri**, on the wall between the windows, was painted by Father Claude Chauchetière following a vision he had of Kateri after her death in 1680.