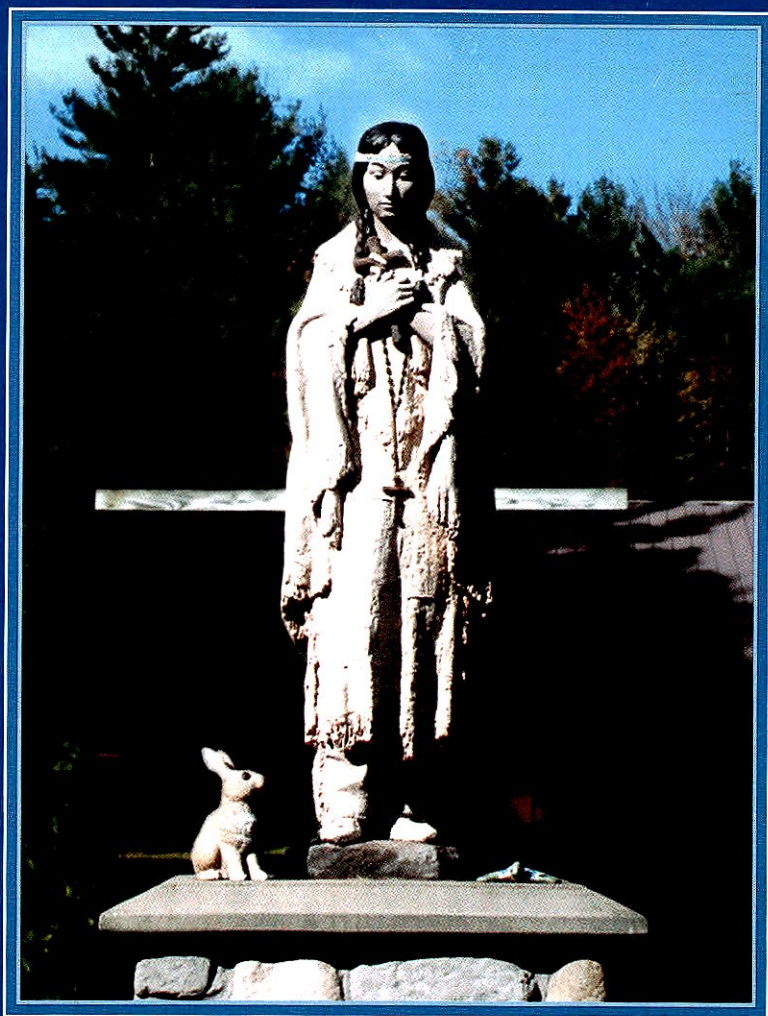


St. Brigid's Parish
Watervliet, New York
and
Blessed
Kateri Tekakwitha



A Connection

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St. Brigid's Parish and Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha A Connection

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Statue of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
National Shrine of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, Fonda, New York

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2 twelve longhouses and was fortified with a twenty foot high double stockade.

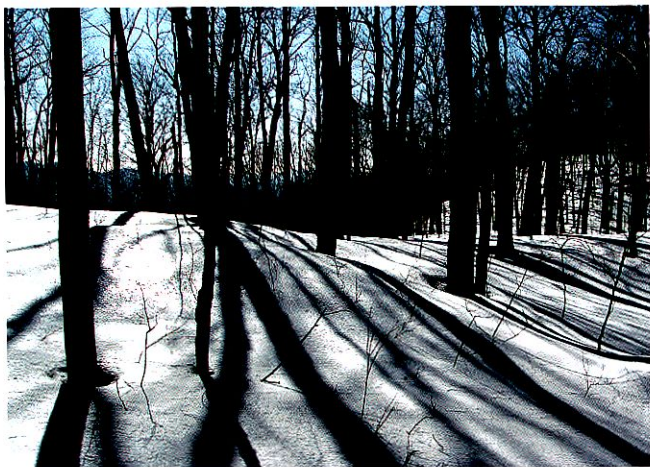
Remembering what she had heard from her mother about the Christian faith, she secretly learned more about Christ from a Christian Mohawk woman, who had been a friend of her mother.

In 1667, following a treaty between the French and the five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, three French Jesuits from Canada, Fathers Frémin, Bruyas, and Pierron, arrived at the village of Caughnawaga. As one of the conditions of the peace treaty, the missionaries were allowed to live among the Turtle, Bear and Wolf Clans of the Mohawks.

Tekakwitha knew that her mother had loved these holy men, had received the Christian faith from them and had said the prayers that the priests were now teaching her. At Christmastime when Tekakwitha first saw the nativity scene, she loved the beautiful lady who was Christ's mother. Thus she developed a long-lasting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In spite of the demands of her uncle that she must marry, she refused to do so, an act of total opposition to the customs of her tribe. Instead, Tekakwitha devoted herself to prayer, to penance, and to comforting the sick and elderly.

Often Kateri sought the solitude of the forest where she prayed before crosses that she had made and affixed to the trees.



When the braves were away during the winter hunt season, Tekakwitha would search with her bare hands through the deep snow for twigs to keep the longhouse fires burning sufficient to warm the elderly and to cook their food. She welcomed her physical pain and suffering which she offered to the crucified Christ.

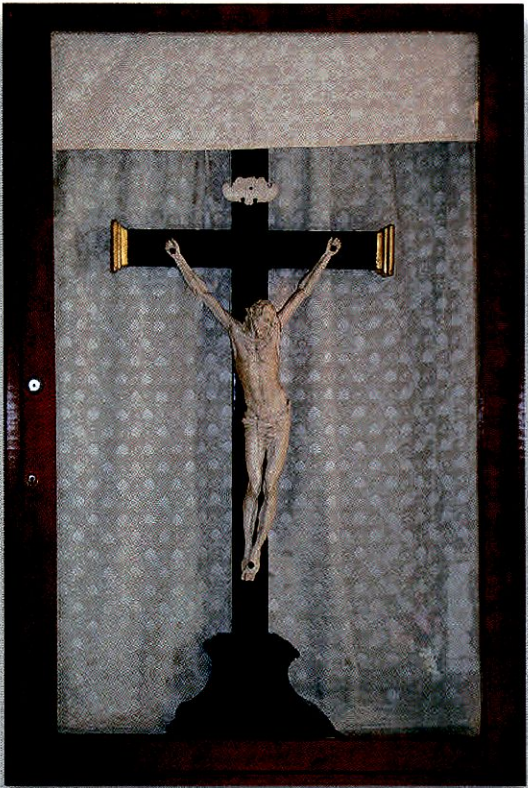
At the age of twenty, on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1676, Tekakwitha was baptized by Father Jacques de Lamberville and chose the name Kateri. Because of her new religion, Kateri was subjected to abuse and ostracized by her relatives and fellow tribesmen. Each Sunday her aunts deprived her of food because she refused to work on that holy day. Children would throw stones at her and with prayerful resignation Kateri withstood an attempt on her life. These conditions together with her uncle's demands that she marry became so burdensome that, at the urging of Father de Lamberville, she prepared to leave. In the fall of 1677 Kateri Tekakwitha sadly left her beloved Mohawk valley, the home of her youth, and fled to Canada to a Christian Indian village where she could live out her faith in peace.

Over the course of two months, Kateri and two companions traveled more than two hundred miles by canoe and on foot through forests, streams, and lakes from Fonda to Sault Saint Louis, Quebec, Canada. There at the St. Francis Xavier Mission, Kateri received her first Holy Communion on Christmas Day 1677.

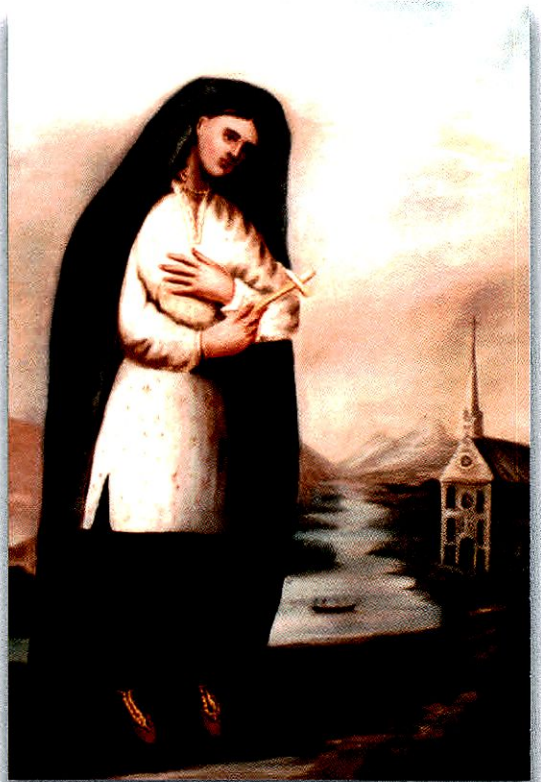


At her new home, Kateri led a life of austerity and prayer while caring for the aged and infirm and teaching the children. She was known for her gentleness, kindness and good humor.

On March 25, 1679, the Feast of the Annunciation, Kateri took a vow of perpetual virginity, probably the first such vow to be taken by a North American Indian.



This ivory crucifix, brought from France in 1680 by Father Jacques Frémin, S.J., hangs in the museum of St. Francis Xavier Mission, Kahnawake, Canada



This painting of Kateri, commenced in 1681 by Father Claude Chauchetière, S.J., also hangs in the museum of St. Francis Xavier Mission



The Cause For Canonization

of Kateri Tekakwitha



The act of initiating a cause for canonization comes under the jurisdiction of the diocese in which the person died. In the case of Kateri Tekakwitha, this was the Archdiocese of Montreal, Canada. When it was determined that the Archbishop of Montreal was not going to initiate her cause, the Bishop of the Albany Diocese, The Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, moved to do so. Since Kateri was baptized in the territory that became a part of the Albany Diocese, Bishop Gibbons started the process after having received the consent of the Archbishop of Montreal.

THE TRIBUNAL

In 1930, Bishop Gibbons appointed a six member tribunal to investigate Kateri's case. Members of the Tribunal were:

The Right Reverend Joseph Delaney, Chairman
Vicar General of the Albany Diocese

The Right Reverend John Glavin
Pastor, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Rensselaer

The Reverend James Hilton
Pastor, Holy Cross Parish, Albany

The Reverend J. Norbert Kelly
Secretary to Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons

The Reverend Louis Lavigne
Pastor, St. Joseph's Parish, Cohoes

The Reverend Henry Miller
Pastor, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Albany

The Tribunal's work consisted of three parts:

- † The investigation of Kateri's reputation of holiness.
This involved the study of documents relating to her life. It also required a thorough investigation of every seeming miracle relating to Kateri that occurred anywhere.
- † The search for any artificial cult of devotion to her.
- † All members of the Tribunal had to visit each site of her burial.
She had been moved three times. Her final resting place is at Kahnawake, Canada.

By 1932, the Tribunal had investigated and fully documented Kateri's case. The findings were then brought to Rome by Bishop Gibbons and presented to The Reverend Carlo Miccinelli, S.J. who was postulator of Kateri's cause.



Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons, right, with Pietro Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, speaking with some Mohawk Indians including Chief Lyons, the prime minister of the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, at the Auriesville Shrine in August 1930. This occasion was the celebration of the canonization of Father Isaac Jogues and his companions, René Goupil and John Lalonde who were martyred at Auriesville in the 1640's. In attendance were 50,000 people from the United States and Canada. While at this ceremony, Bishop Gibbons resolved to pursue the case for canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha.

THE DECREE OF VENERABLE

The decree of Venerable is the official acknowledgement by Rome of a person's heroic virtues. It is the first step in the process of Canonization.

In June 1942, the Sacred Congregation of Rites assembled at the Vatican with His Holiness Pope Pius XII presiding. The purpose of the assembly was to determine whether the virtues of Kateri Tekakwitha were of heroic degree. In response to this question posed by His Eminence Carlo Cardinal Salotti, the members of the Sacred Congregation cast their votes.

For the next six months Pope Pius XII reflected on the decision of the Sacred Congregation and prayed for enlightenment from God. He then summoned Cardinal Salotti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation, on January 3, 1943.

His Holiness Pope Pius XII offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Then he solemnly proclaimed:

It has been proved in this instance and for the purpose under consideration, that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, Love of God and Neighbor, and the cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude and subordinate virtues of the Venerable Servant of God, Kateri Tekakwitha, were heroic.

Kateri having been declared Venerable, the Cause for her Canonization was advanced.

Beatification Ceremony *and Related Events*

Thursday, June 19, 1980

With great joy and excitement over the pending Beatification of Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, a group of eighty pilgrims from the Albany Diocese joined by pilgrims from other dioceses, boarded a bus at the Teresian House in Albany to take them to Kennedy Airport for a flight to Rome, Italy. The group was led by Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany, who was joined by Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester. Many of the Indian pilgrims wore their native ceremonial attire and carried a variety of gifts for Pope John Paul II. The Albany group was among some two hundred pilgrims from the United States and four hundred pilgrims from Canada who were to attend the Beatification Ceremonies.

Friday, June 20, 1980

Following their arrival in Rome, the Albany Diocese pilgrims were greeted by Robert Wagner, the United States Envoy to the Vatican and a former mayor of New York City. Mr. Wagner hosted a reception for the group.

Saturday, June 21, 1980

The American pilgrims were granted a private audience with Pope John Paul II and President Jimmy Carter held in the Clementine Hall at the Vatican. In the audience were three American cardinals: Cardinal Cooke of New York, Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia, and Cardinal Baum formerly of Washington who was then the head of the Vatican's education office, and the Bishop of Albany, Howard J. Hubbard.

President Carter spoke briefly and was interrupted by rousing applause when he acknowledged the presence and contributions of "His Excellency Howard Hubbard." The Pope spoke to the assembled and praised the

people and the spirit of the United States, ending his remarks with the refrain "God Bless America." 11

Sunday June 22, 1980

Albany – Hugh L. Carey, Governor of the State of New York, proclaimed Sunday June 22, 1980 Kateri Tekakwitha Day to honor this Native American maiden.

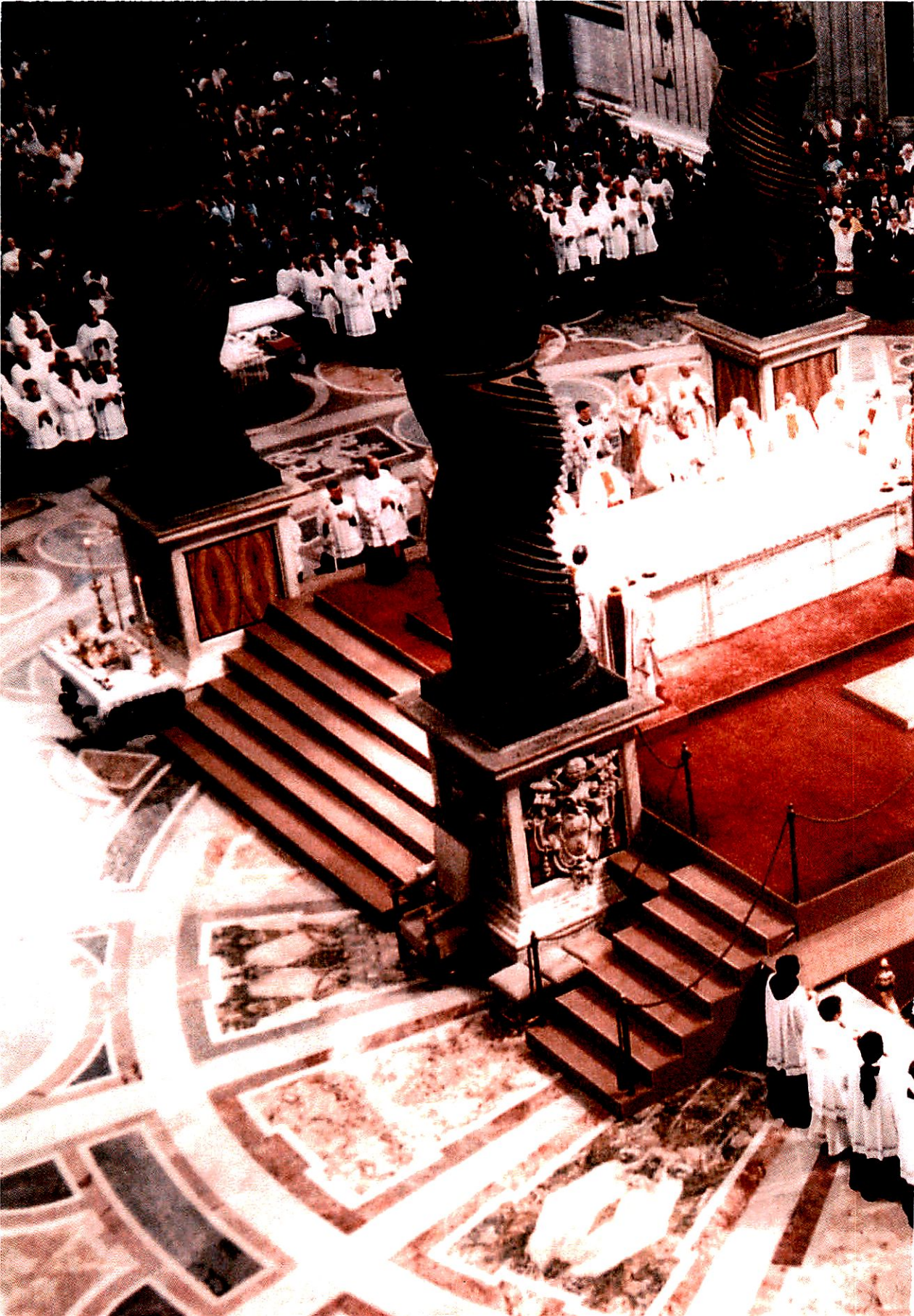
Rome – The Beatification Ceremonies in St. Peter's Basilica took place before an audience of twenty-five thousand pilgrims. Pope John Paul II concelebrated a two and one half hour mass together with three cardinals and eleven bishops. His Excellency Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany, personally petitioned the Holy Father to beatify "The Lady of Quality" as she has been titled by the people of her tribe.

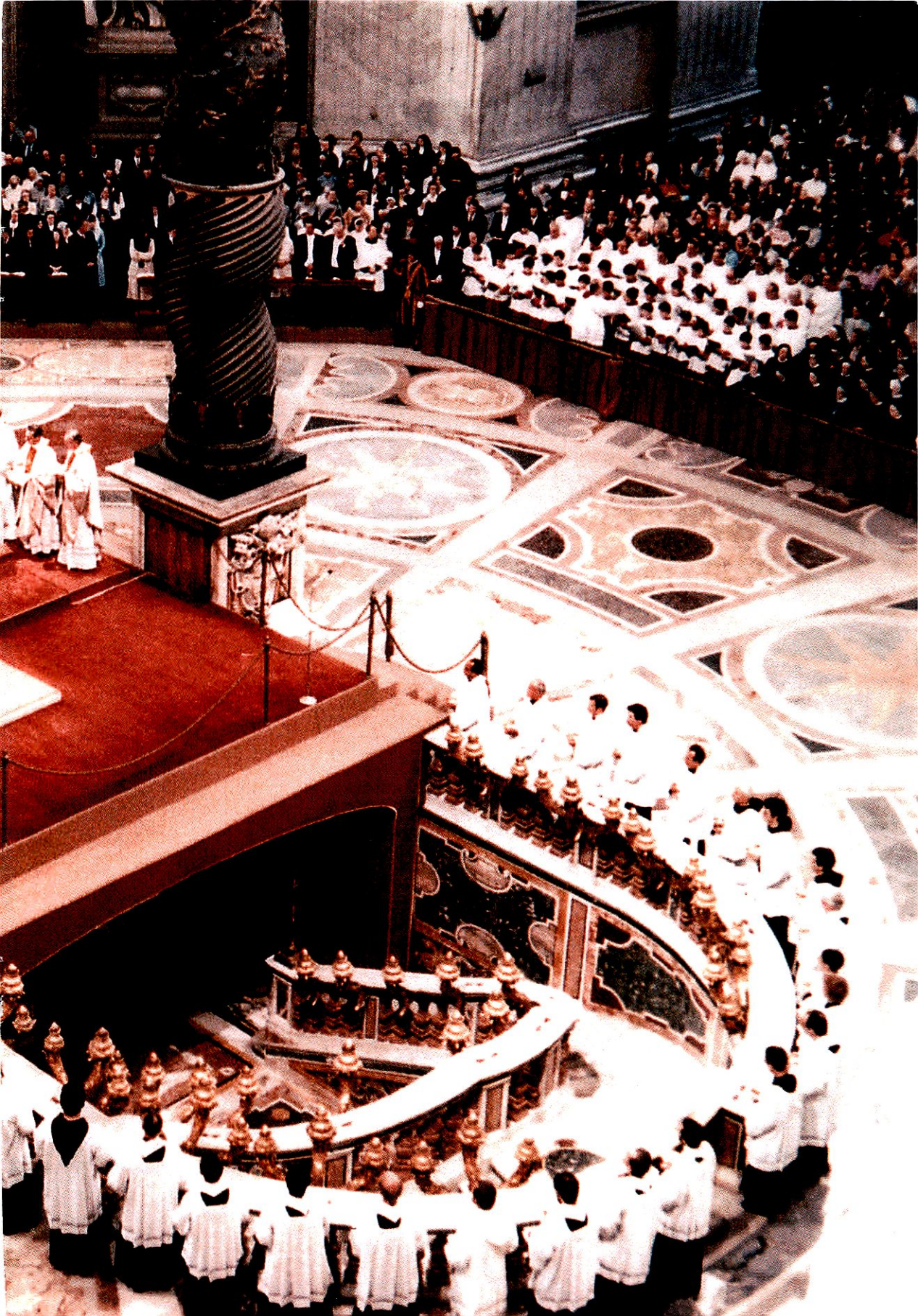
At this mass The Reverend Mister Joseph G. Busch (now our pastor) had the honor of reading the Gospel.

In his homily, the Pope, referring to Kateri's refusal to marry, stated that in view of the social condition of women in the Indian tribes, her decision exposed her to the risk of living as an outcast and in poverty. He stated further that her vow of perpetual virginity taken on March 25, 1679, the Feast of the Annunciation, was a bold, unusual, and prophetic gesture and probably it was the first time such action was taken among the North American Indians.

His Holiness ended the homily with these words:

The last months of her life are an ever clearer manifestation of her solid faith, straightforward humility, calm resignation, and radiant joy, even in the midst of terrible sufferings. Her last words, simple and sublime, whispered at the moment of her death, sum up, like a noble hymn, a life of purest charity: "Jesus, I love you."





During the mass, Indians in Native dress, representing eighteen tribes in North America, offered traditional gifts to the Pope including a peace pipe, a chief's black and white feathered headdress, leather beaded moccasins, and a white stole bearing Indian symbols and beadwork images of the turtle, the wolf, and the bear, representing the three clans of the Mohawk Tribe. Long applause echoed through St. Peter's Basilica as Indians in full ceremonial dress approached the altar and knelt before the Pope who ignored protocol and spoke to them at length.



Representatives of eighteen North American tribes offering traditional gifts to Pope John Paul II
St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, June 22, 1980

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, June 22, 1980: Pope John Paul II Concelebrating Mass
The Reverend Mister Joseph G. Busch is standing directly behind the Pope



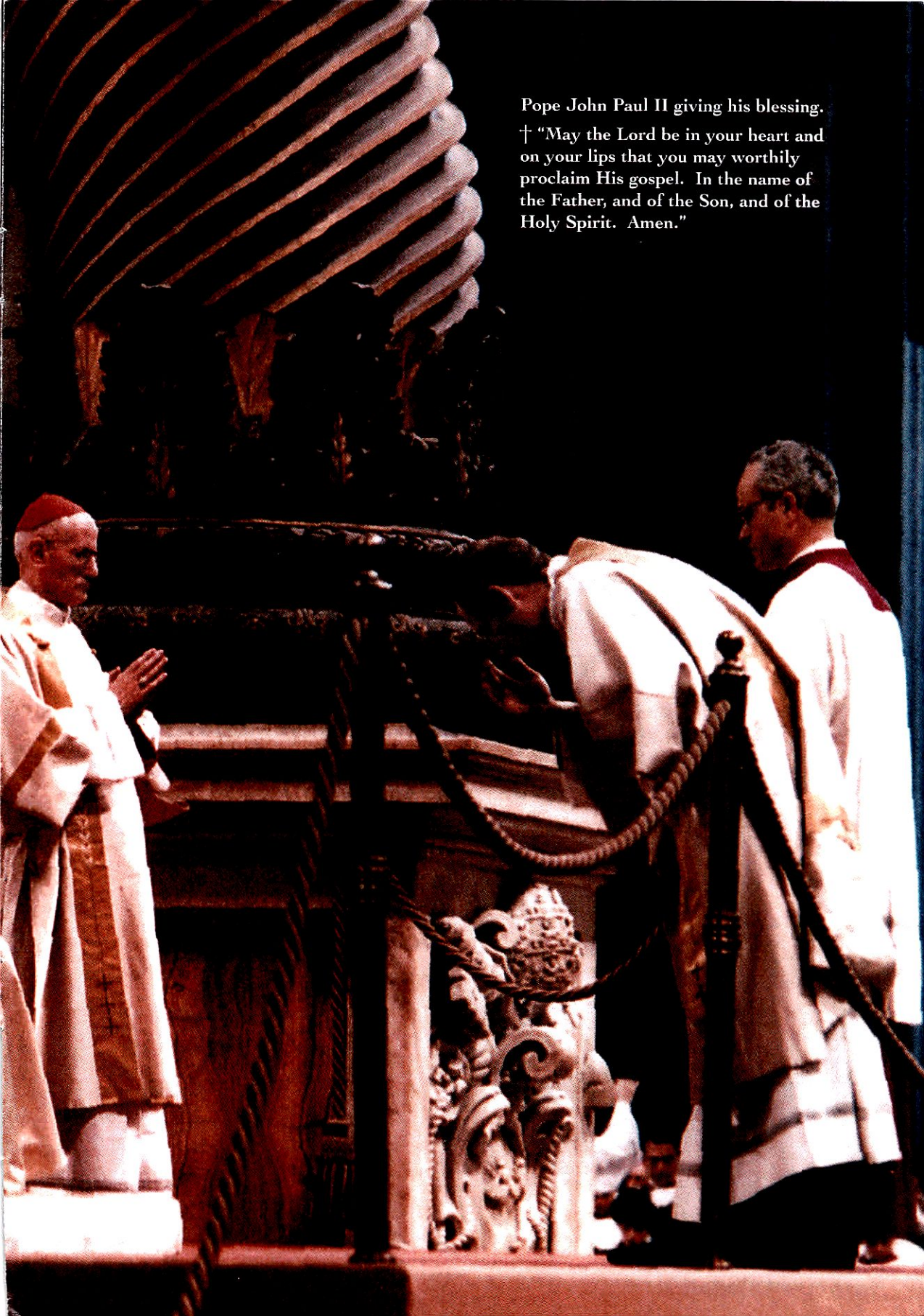
The Profession of the Creed
The Reverend Mister Joseph G. Busch is standing to the far left



The Reverend Mister Joseph G. Busch
asking the Pope's blessing,
"Holy Father, may I have your blessing"

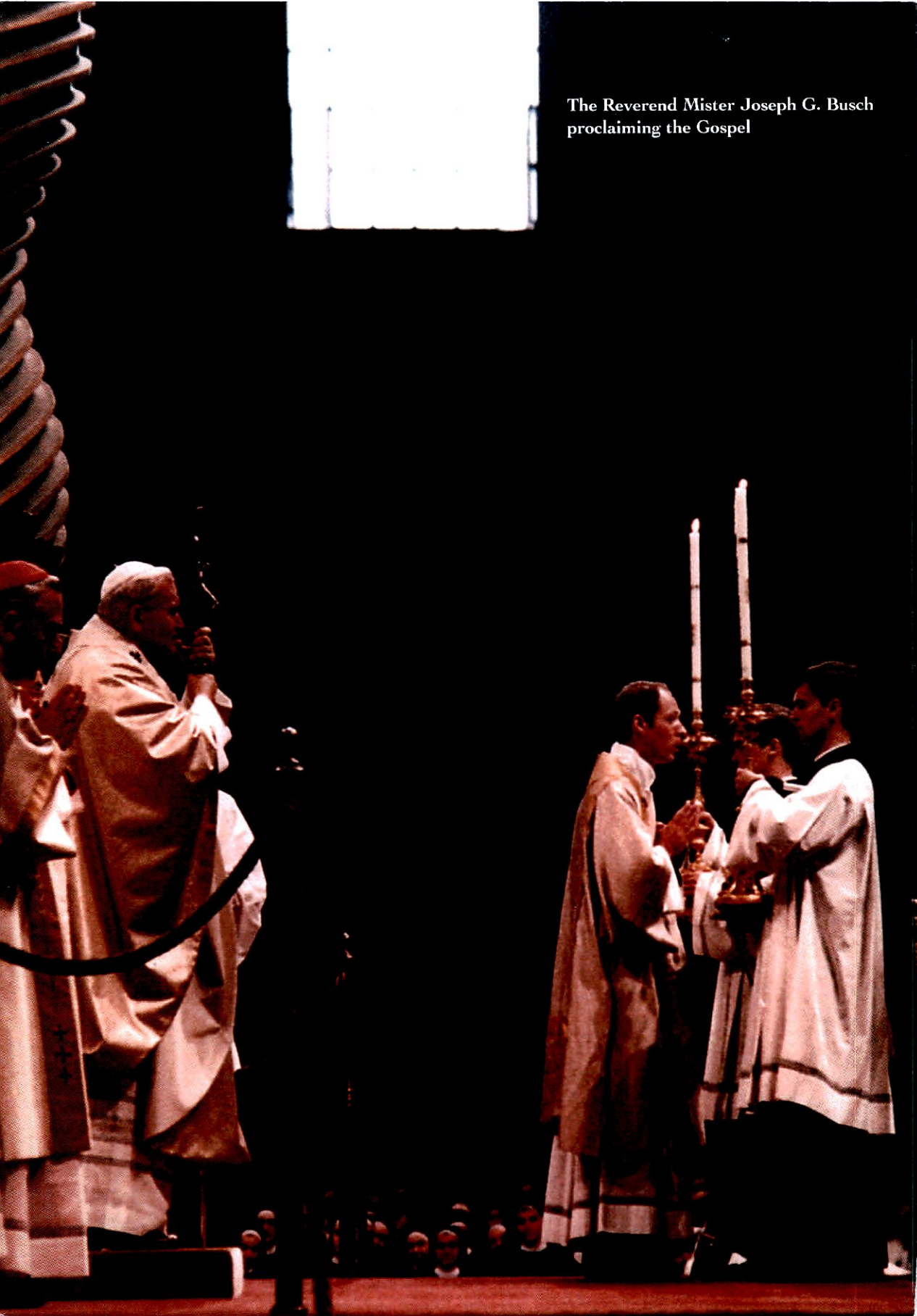




A photograph of Pope John Paul II in white papal vestments, including a zucchetto, standing on a balcony and giving a blessing. He is on the left, with his hands clasped in a prayerful gesture. To his right, another man in white vestments is bowing forward. Further right, a third man in white vestments with a red sash stands looking on. The balcony has a decorative metal railing with thick ropes. The background is dark, and the scene is lit with warm, golden light.

Pope John Paul II giving his blessing.
† "May the Lord be in your heart and
on your lips that you may worthily
proclaim His gospel. In the name of
the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit. Amen."

The Reverend Mister Joseph G. Busch
proclaiming the Gospel





Monday, June 23, 1980

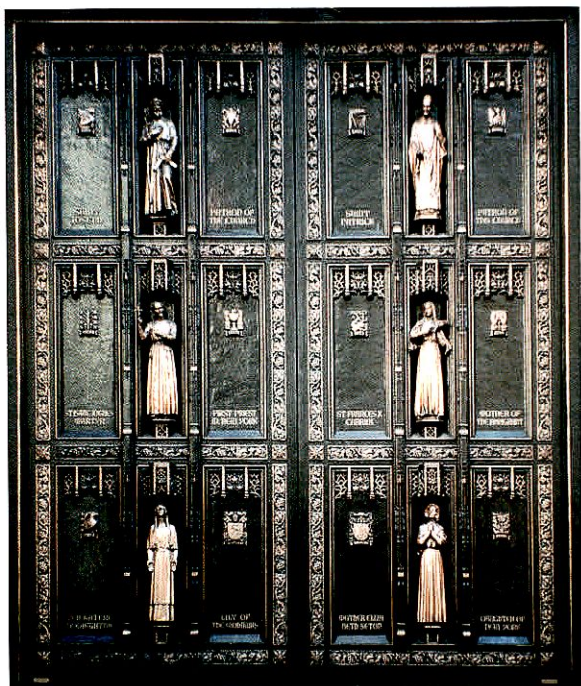
At the North American College in Rome, the American pilgrims assembled in the chapel. A Mass of Thanksgiving was concelebrated by fifty priests with John Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia as principal celebrant. Also participating in the celebration of the mass were Terrance Cardinal Cooke of New York and several bishops from the United States including His Excellency Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany.

Our pastor, then The Reverend Mister Joseph G. Busch, had the honor of serving as Deacon at this Mass of Thanksgiving.

Bishop Hubbard delivered the homily in which he extolled the virtues of Blessed Kateri.

DEVOTION TO BLESSED KATERI IS WIDESPREAD

A statue of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha is on the bronze Ceremonial Door of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.



The Bronze Ceremonial Door,
St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York

Left Door:

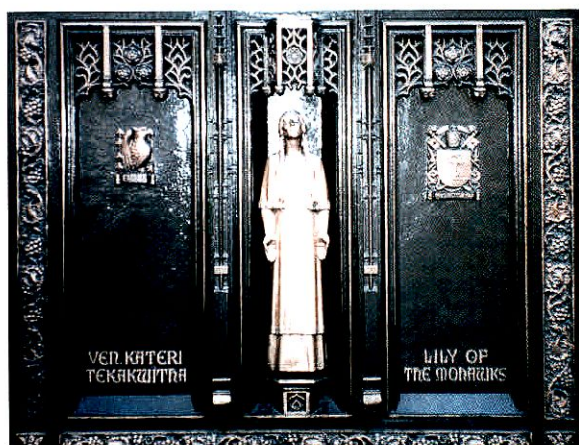
(top to bottom) St. Joseph
St. Isaac Jogues
Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

Right Door:

(top to bottom) St. Patrick
St. Francis Xavier Cabrini
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Kateri's Statue on Ceremonial Door of St. Patrick's Cathedral

To the left is an American Eagle with the word *Fides* (Faith). To the right is the coat of arms of Pope Pius XII, who proclaimed her Venerable in 1943, with his motto *Opus Justitiae Pax* (Peace is the Work of Justice).



In 2002, Pope John Paul II designated Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha as the patroness of World Youth Day held July 18-28, in Toronto, Canada.

In the United States the original date on which Blessed Kateri's feast was commemorated was April 17, the date of her death. Since this date often occurs during the Easter Season, her feast day was changed to July 14 by action of the Bishops of the United States at their meeting in Washington, D.C. in 1982.

BLESSED KATERI AND ST. BRIGID'S PARISH

23

One might imagine that Kateri was familiar with what later became our parish territory. On occasion she would accompany her uncle when he traveled from Fonda to the shore of the Hudson River to trade his fur pelts for items brought by the Dutch and later the English.

From this account of our parish connections to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, one can understand that our ties to her are strong. Our motivation to pray for her canonization is equally strong.



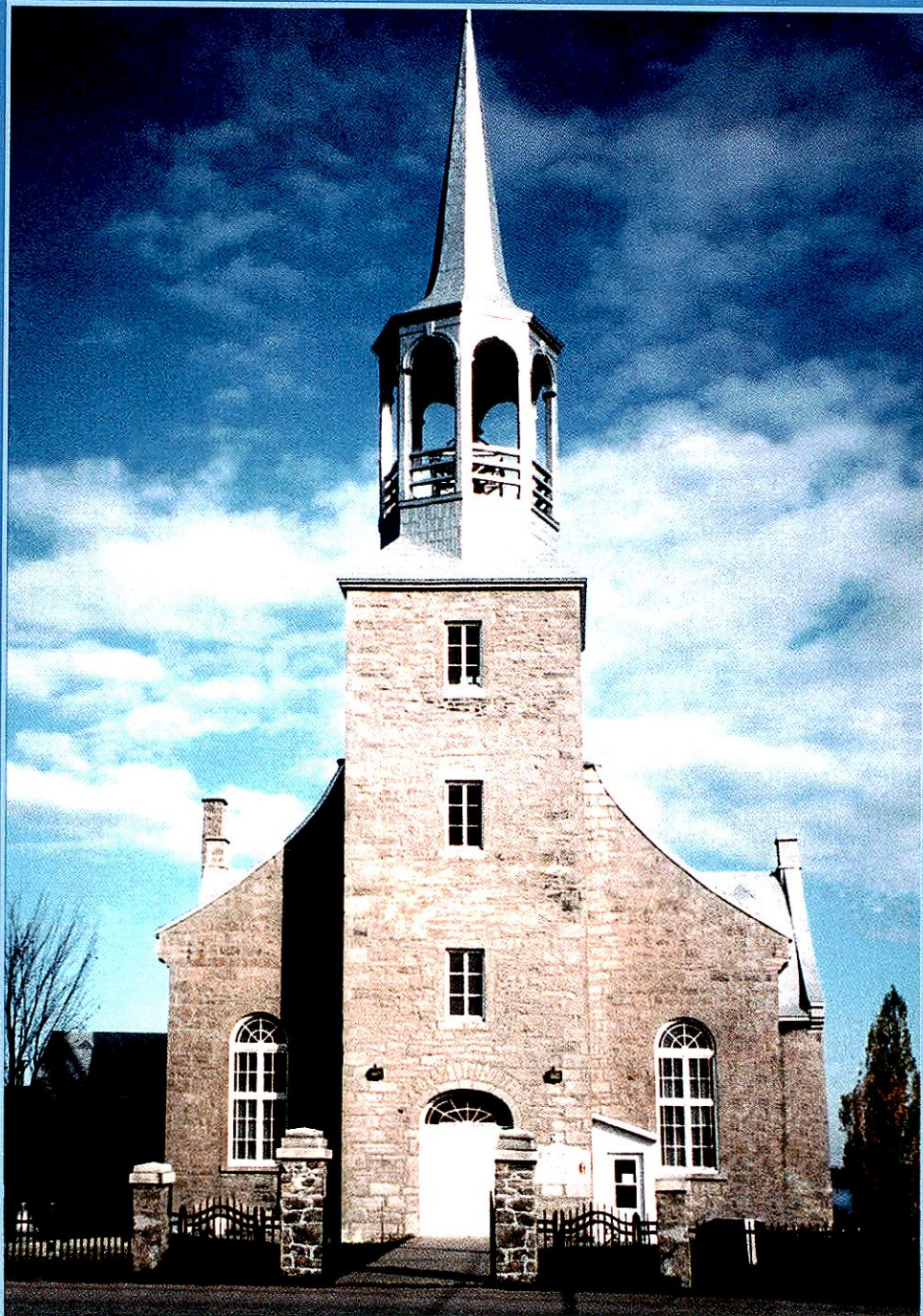
St. Brigid's Church
Watervliet, New York

Prayer For Canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

*O God, who, among the many marvels of Your Grace in the New World,
did cause to blossom on the banks of the Mohawk and of the St. Lawrence,
the pure and tender Lily, Kateri Tekakwitha,
grant, we beseech You, the favor we beg through her intercession –
that this Young Lover of Jesus and of His Cross,
may soon be counted among her Saints by Holy Mother Church,
and that our hearts may be enkindled with a stronger desire to
imitate her innocence and faith. Through the same Christ Our Lord, Amen.*

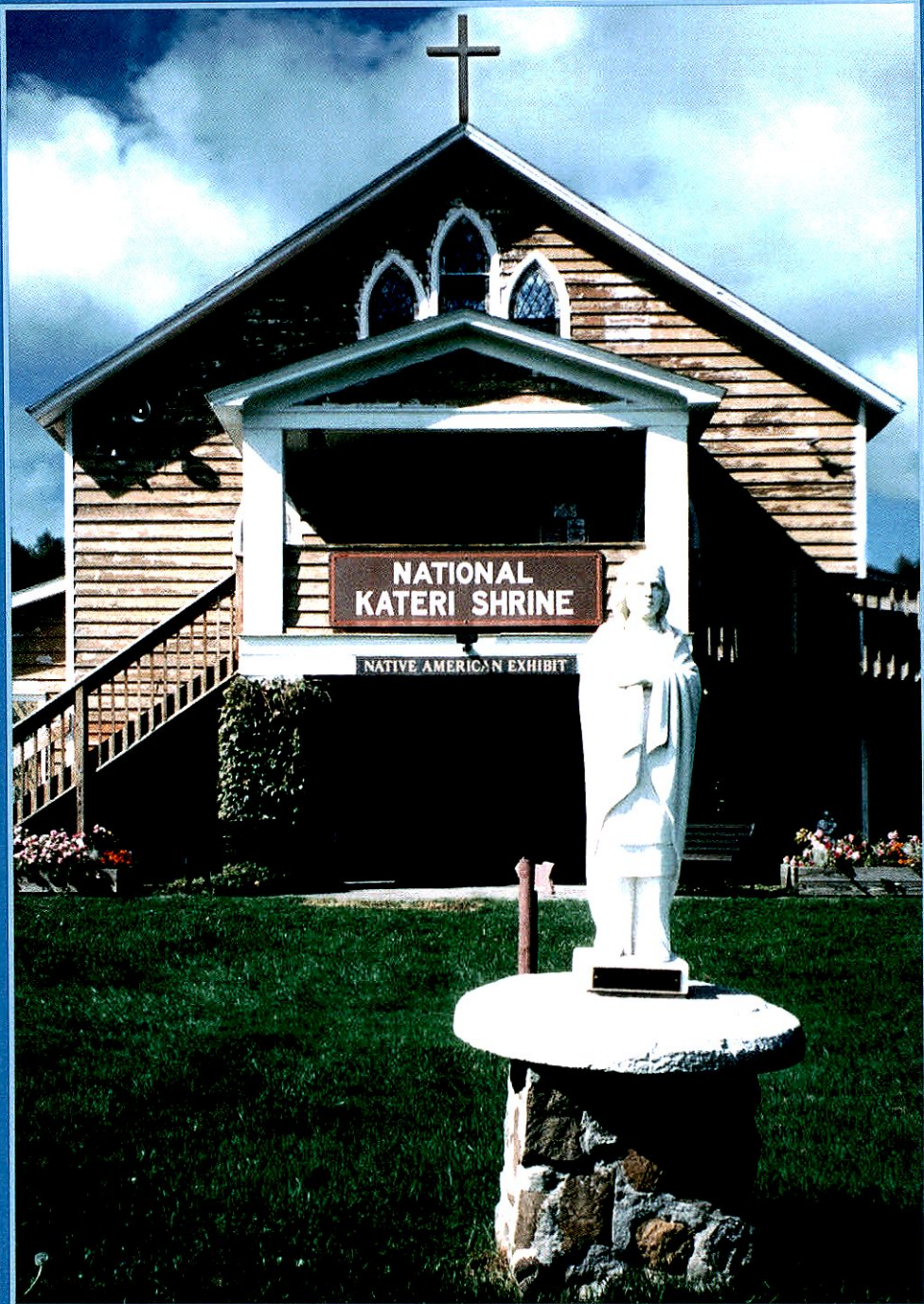
Imprimatur – Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard D.D.





Final resting place of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

Church of Saint Francis Xavier
Kahnawake, P.Q., Canada



National Shrine of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
Fonda, New York