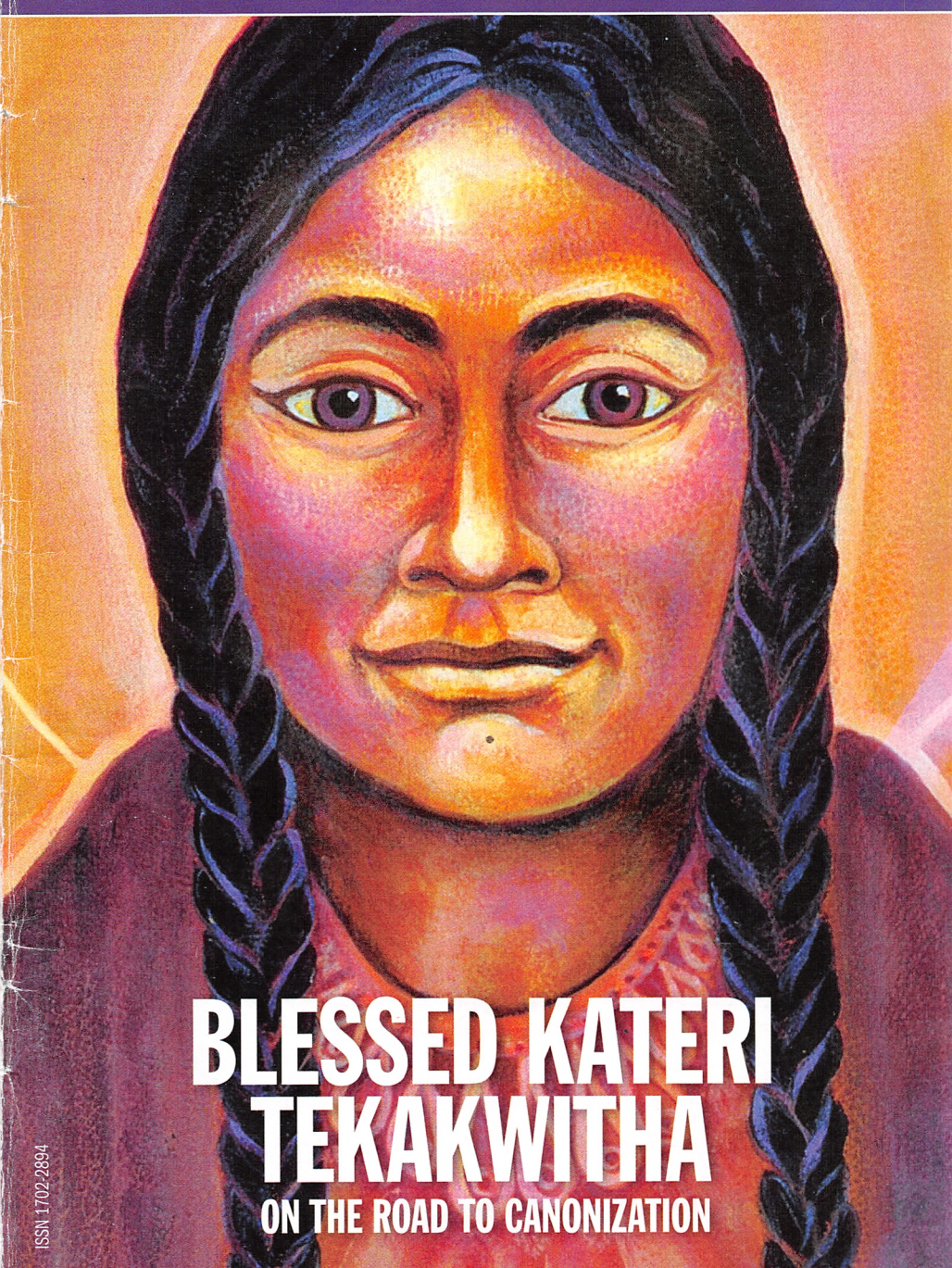


# CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN CANADA

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## BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA

ON THE ROAD TO CANONIZATION

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PLUS: Archbishop now Cardinal • New inroads in Natuashish • God's Word





## 'GO OUT AND TELL'

**P**arents and adult members of the Christian community to which children belong are important teachers by the way they live their faith, Notre Dame Sister Denise Bérubé of Marywood Retreat Centre in Cranbrook, British Columbia, writes in this issue.

In various mission communities in Canada where religious sisters, such as Sister Mary Jeanne Davidson, S.S.N.D., and Sister Sheila Fortune, C.S.J., teach the young, each child has an opportunity to grow in relationship with God. Much like their elders, the young are ready and waiting to hear the Good News, and, yes, even to "go out and tell" their friends, family and community members.

At a Mass of Thanksgiving after his elevation to the College of Cardinals January 6, Cardinal-designate Thomas Collins of Toronto said it is the duty of the baptized to "point to Jesus" as John the Baptist did in his own humble way. Our children in the missions are also pointing to Jesus with their small gestures and little prayers.

*Patria C. Rivera*

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# SAINT OF THE LONGHOUSE

*'There is much for us to learn from this humble young woman, Kateri'*

BY FATHER PHILIP KENNEDY, PRESIDENT

**I**t is odd to think, I guess, that if Kateri Tekakwitha had lived about two centuries later, she would have been carefully fitted with special prescription sunglasses. Indeed, for a young woman who endured so much through illness and alienation from her community, a further burden was placed on her when her eyesight was greatly affected after her family and relatives died from smallpox, and she survived, but became severely sensitive to direct sunlight and

even bright light. Her contemporary biographers stressed the necessary practice she had of always wearing a veil or blanket over her head to block the sunlight, and in fact, was pleased even to stay as much as possible in the longhouse, the centre of activity and community creativity for a settlement. That fact explains the detail in the early painting of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha by Jesuit Father Claude Chauchetière done in 1696, 16 years after Kateri's death— Kateri appears with a cloak over her head and shoulders, avoiding the unwanted glare of daylight, while holding significantly a simple cross of her newly-adopted faith in Christ.

There is much for us to learn from this humble young woman, Kateri. Orphaned at a very young age, and displaced from her native town, she had to become accustomed to serving the members of an extended family, who made great demands on her. The

**'Kateri appears with a cloak over her head and shoulders, avoiding the unwanted glare of daylight'**





Early painting of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha by Jesuit Father Claude Chauchetière, 1696.



writers at the time went into detail about how Kateri applied herself to the labours of the longhouse. She ground the corn, fetched water and carried wood. She avoided idleness and created

**'In addition to her habits of industry and devotion, she remained an example of single-mindedness and faith'**

small articles with extraordinary skill. But especially she had a natural horror of the impurity and scandal around her.

Kateri resolved to dedicate herself to Christ, and be consecrated in her life to her Lord; therefore, she had to undergo much opposition from her community when she declined to marry. In addition to her habits of industry and devotion, she remained an example of single-mindedness and faith. The difference from others that her heroic virtues demonstrated once led a crazed man to menace her with a hatchet, but the amazing equanimity she showed

cowed the bully into uncomprehending submission.

She approached the Christian faith with deliberateness, and was only baptized at the age of twenty, then lived for just four more years, dying in 1680 at Kahnawake, not far from Montréal. From the earliest days after her death she was heralded as a striking example of chastity.

For all those who have to undergo disruptions in their lives, caused by disease, or by ran-cour in a community, or by social changes, or by personal hatred, or by the effect of one's own Christian principles, Kateri Tekakwitha is a saint who stands close to us, to guide us through these difficulties. This is partly the reason why Kateri has been a true patron for the First Nations of Canada and the United States for 330 years, but these reasons should make her especially appealing to everyone of all origins, at all times.

This saint of the longhouse of the 17th century is our very own, and we shall always cherish her presence in the world that needs healing. Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us!

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*Blessed Kateri is scheduled for canonization—or inclusion in the Church's canon, or list, of recognized saints—this year. She will become Canada's first aboriginal saint.*





# BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA

## ON THE ROAD TO CANONIZATION

*Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha 'worthy of promotion to the ranks of the saints because of her life of exemplary devotion and sacrifice'*

BY FATHER PHILIP KENNEDY, PRESIDENT

**ON** Monday, December 19, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI met with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation in the Roman Curia charged with the promotion of causes of sainthood.

The Holy Father agreed with the congregation that the Native Canadian woman, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, was worthy of promotion to the ranks of the saints, because of her life of exemplary devotion and sacrifice and because this fact has been reinforced by the miracles of healing that have been effected through her direct intercession.





Statue of Kateri  
Tekakwitha on  
the outside of the  
Basilica of Sainte-  
Anne-de-Beaupré,  
near Quebec City.





**'Kateri is one of  
their own. She is  
also one of us, who  
struggle in the faith  
despite contrary  
pressures from the  
outside world'**

Painting by Sister Dorothy Grills, C.S.J

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha has been venerated for a long time, in fact, since her death near Montréal in 1680 at the age of 24.

Many First Nations people already have an intense devotion to Kateri, as their patron and example, and several chapels, churches, schools and shrines have been dedicated to her memory. Her canonization, which may be scheduled for the Easter season of 2012, or some more opportune date, will be a source of joy for First Nations peoples. It will be a realization of the grace and holiness possessed by many of our native Canadians, and their steadfastness in the faith in spite of numerous tribulations. Kateri is one of their own. She is also one of us, who struggle in the faith despite contrary pressures from the outside world. Kateri is also a sign that Christ remains with us, and can bring peace to our unsettled communities if we let him enter our individual hearts.

Blessed Kateri is called "Lily of the Mohawks," as a tribute to her purity and mark of the pride of her belonging to all Native Canadians and Americans.