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Catherine
Tekakwitha

Imprimi Potest
Fr. Vincentius M. Mayer, O.M.C.
Minister Provincialis.
Ad. S. Catharinam,
Apud Seaside Park, in Neo Caes.
Die 17a Aprilis, 1939

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† Edmund F. Gibbons,
Bishop of Albany,
Albany, April 28, 1939.

Third Edition
1947

Foreword



THE ever increasing requests for information concerning Catherine Tekakwitha have caused this short account of the "Lily of the Mohawks" to be presented to the public.

Small in size but complete in facts, this brochure has been written so that "those who run may read." There are three short chapters. The first chapter refers to Catherine Tekakwitha from the year of her birth in 1656 to the year of her death in 1680 together with notations covering the action taken by the Catholic Church in recent years because of the enduring fame of this Mohawk Indian maiden. The incidents mentioned in this first chapter are arranged in chronological order with the year at the opening of each paragraph. Facts only are given! For the full details of the life of Catherine Tekakwitha one of the many available books must be read.

The second chapter summarizes the incidents which took place at Caughnawaga Castle on the banks of the Mohawk River both during the life of Catherine Tekakwitha as well as in the year 1938.

The third chapter calls attention to Tekakwitha Friary and St. Peter Chapel.

This brochure is issued by the Franciscan Fathers (Order of Friars Minor Conventual) at Tekakwitha Friary, Box 6, R.D. 1, Fonda, N. Y.

Catherine Tekakwitha

1656: Tekakwitha was born either at Ossernenon or at Gandaouaga (now Auriesville, N. Y.) on the south bank of the Mohawk River.

Her father was a Mohawk Indian chief of the Turtle Clan.

Her mother was a Christian Algonquin Indian who had been taken captive by the Mohawks during a raid made by them upon the French settlers at Three Rivers, Canada.

1659-1660: An epidemic of smallpox caused the death of the father and mother of Tekakwitha. Thereupon she became a member of her paternal uncle's household.

1666: A war party, led by De Tracy and composed of French soldiers and Canadian Indians, destroyed the Mohawk Indian castles on the south shore of the Mohawk River.

1667: After the French and Canadian Indian war party had departed from the vicinity, the Mohawk Indians reconstructed their villages or castles on the north side of the Mohawk River. The inhabitants of Gandaouaga erected a new strongly fortified castle, just one quarter of a mile west of the present village of Fonda, to which they gave the name of Caughnawaga. To this new castle came Tekakwitha in the company of her uncle.

1669: Father Pierron, S.J., and Father Boniface, S.J., ministered to the Christian Mohawk Indians at Caughnawaga where a small bark chapel, dedicated to St. Peter, had been erected.

1675: Father James de Lamberville, S.J., arrived at Caughnawaga in the place of Father Boniface.

1676: Tekakwitha was baptized in St. Peter Chapel at Caughnawaga on Easter Sunday, April 18, and took the name of Catherine (Kateri in the Indian language).

1677: Catherine Tekakwitha, persecuted in her native village of Caughnawaga near the shore of the Mohawk River, fled to the vil-

lage of the Christian Indians at Caughnawaga on the bank of the St. Lawrence River where she arrived during the autumn of the same year.

1677: On Christmas Day, Catherine Tekakwitha received her First Holy Communion.

1679: On March 25, Catherine Tekakwitha made a vow of perpetual virginity with the consent of her spiritual guide Fr. Cholenec, S.J.

1680: Catherine Tekakwitha died on Wednesday, April 17, in the village of Caughnawaga where she had remained since her arrival during the autumn of 1677.

1884: The Archbishops and Bishops of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore petitioned the Holy See to institute the process for the beatification of Catherine Tekakwitha.

1931: After years of preparation, the Ordinary or Informative Process in the cause of Catherine Tekakwitha was arranged and resulted in the appointment of the Diocesan Tribunal at Albany, N. Y.

1938: During June, the Historical Section of the Congregation of Rites, at Rome, declared that the documents in the case of Catherine Tekakwitha are complete, genuine and trustworthy; that they establish Catherine Tekakwitha's renown for holiness, and a solid basis for final judgment that her virtues were heroic.

1939: On May 20, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, approved of the Introduction of the Cause of Catherine Tekakwitha.

1940: Quoting the words of the Rev. John J. Wynne, S.J., the Vice-Postulator for the Cause of Catherine Tekakwitha—"By a special blessing of Divine Providence November 26 of this year has been set, with the approbation of the Holy Father, as the date for the first discussion on the virtues of the Servant of God, Catherine Tekakwitha."

1943: At Rome, on January 3, 1943, was issued the "Decree approved by His Holiness Pope Pius XII declaring heroic the Virtues of the Servant of God, the Venerable Catherine Tekakwitha".

Caughnawaga

Caughnawaga was a fortified "castle" of the Mohawk Indians during the years 1667 to 1693,* located on the hill known as the "Sand Flats," about one-quarter of a mile west of the present village of Fonda, N. Y. Catherine Tekakwitha lived there during the years 1667 to 1677.

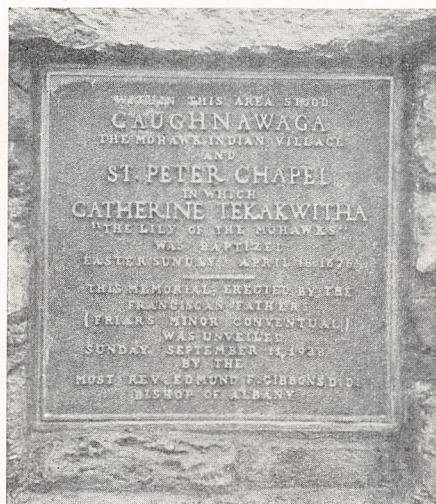
Historical records of the year 1669 mention a small bark chapel called "St. Peters," which the Indians had built at Caughnawaga, as being in charge of the Jesuit, Father Boniface.

During 1675, Father James de Lamberville, S.J., arrived at Caughnawaga as the successor of Father Boniface, S.J.

On Easter Sunday, April 18, 1676, Catherine Tekakwitha, "The Lily of the Mohawks," was baptized at Caughnawaga within St. Peter Chapel by Father James de Lamberville, S.J.

These facts are epitomized in the inscription on the bronze tablet of the stone monument which was erected during the summer of 1938 by the Franciscan Friars on the site where once stood Caughnawaga, the Mohawk Indian Castle.

* Caughnawaga was totally destroyed during the year 1693 at which time a second war party of French soldiers and Canadian Indians invaded the Mohawk Valley and burned the castles of the Mohawk Indians.



THE MEMORIAL TABLET

On Sunday, September 11, 1938, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, D.D., Bishop of Albany, N. Y., unveiled and blessed the stone monument which had been erected to the memory of Catherine Tekakwitha. This was the first public demonstration ever conducted on the site of old Caughnawaga where once stood St. Peter Chapel.

Near to the above mentioned monument stand the Stations of the Cross in great simplicity. Each station is a large cedar cross to which is affixed a wooden plaque bearing the number of the station. At a point near the fourteenth station a beautiful view is obtained of the Mohawk Valley.



TEKAKWITHA MEMORIAL

The stone monument and the Stations of the Cross are located on the upper section of the tract of 130 acres of land which is known as the Tekakwitha Property.

Tekakwitha Friary and St. Peter Chapel

THE lower section of the Tekakwitha Property slopes south from the "Sand Flats" towards the Mohawk River and has for its boundary line the Albany-Utica State Highway, No. 5. At a point on this highway, about one-half mile west of Fonda, N. Y., stands the Tekakwitha Friary, the residence of the Franciscan Fathers. Within the Friary is a chapel which may be visited by the faithful, especially during the winter when the large St. Peter Chapel is closed.



TEKAKWITHA FRIARY

During the summer of 1938, and with the consent of His Excellency, The Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, D.D., Bishop of Albany, N. Y., the Franciscan Friars converted a large barn, standing near the Tekakwitha Friary, into a public chapel. It was considered proper that the second public chapel on the Tekakwitha Property should bear the name of St. Peter as did the first or little bark chapel in which Catherine Tekakwitha had been baptized. And so St. Peter Chapel stands next to Tekakwitha Friary as a silent reminder of the even simpler place of worship which stood on the "Sand Flats" at Caughnawaga in the year 1669.



ST. PETER CHAPEL

Holy Mass is celebrated daily on the Tekakwitha Property; either in the Friary Chapel or in the St. Peter Chapel according to the season of the year. Also, special prayers are offered to Almighty God each day to obtain, if possible, the happy conclusion of the cause of Catherine Tekakwitha, "The Lily of the Mohawks."

The faithful are invited to visit the Tekakwitha Property, especially St. Peter Chapel, for the purpose of praying. Those who are unable to travel to this, the place where Catherine Tekakwitha was baptized, may ask to be included in the daily special prayers as an evidence of their union in the effort to secure, if possible, the honor of the altar for our Mohawk Indian maiden.

The Franciscan Fathers, who are in charge of the Tekakwitha Property, are willing, at all times, to inform the faithful of the hour of Holy Mass. Special services are held each Sunday afternoon during the summer months. Upon request, groups of visitors will be informed on the Tekakwitha Property by one of the Franciscan Friars who will lead them also on the Way of the Cross when desired.

Address all communications to:

THE FRANCISCAN FATHERS,
TEKAKWITHA FRIARY,
R.D. 1, Box 6,
FONDA, NEW YORK

CATHERINE TEKAKWITHA

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1666: A war party, led by De Tracy and composed of French soldiers and Canadian Indians, destroyed the Mohawk Indian castles on the south shore of the Mohawk River, including Gandaouaga (which the early Dutch called Caughnawaga).

1667: After the French and Canadian Indian war party had departed from the vicinity, the Mohawk Indians reconstructed their villages or castles on the north side of the Mohawk River. The inhabitants of Gandaouaga erected a new strongly fortified castle, about one half of a mile west of the present village of Fonda, which they again named Gandaouaga (Caughnawaga). To this new castle came Tekakwitha in the company of her uncle.

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CAUGHNAWAGA

Caughnawaga (Gandaouaga) was a fortified "castle" of the Mohawk Indians during the years 1666/7-1693, located on the hill now known as the "Sand Flats" about one-half mile west of the present village of Fonda, N. Y. Catherine Tekakwitha lived there during the years 1666/7-1677.

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Caughnawaga (Gandaouaga) was totally destroyed during the year 1693 on which occasion another war party of French soldiers and Canadian Indians invaded the Mohawk Valley and burned the castles of the Mohawk Indians the second time.

On Sunday, September 11, 1938, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, D.D., Bishop of Albany, N. Y., unveiled and blessed the stone monument which had been erected to the memory of Catherine Tekakwitha. This was the first public demonstration ever conducted on the site of old Caughnawaga (Gandaouaga) where once stood St. Peter Chapel.

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The
Memorial
Tablet

After years of careful historical research and diligent archaeological investigations, the actual position and extent of the Caughnawaga (Gandaouaga) castle, for the years 1666/7–1693, were authentically established by excavations made during the year 1950 whereby the entire double lines of the stockade posts of this Mohawk Indian castle were brought to light and fully recorded. The stone monument, mentioned above, is approximately 75 feet south of the south-east corner of the double stockade lines. Archaeological excavations, continued yearly since 1950, have brought to light the evidences of the long bark-houses of the Mohawks within the stockaded area. Painted stakes mark the exact position and dimension of each house. A scaled map and drawing of the village is now being completed.



Tekakwitha Memorial

In the field, east of the stone monument, stand the Stations of the Cross in great simplicity. Each station is a large cedar cross to which is affixed a wooden plaque bearing the number of the station. At a point near the fourteenth station a beautiful view of the Mohawk Valley is obtained.

TEKAKWITHA FRIARY AND ST. PETER CHAPEL

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St. Peter Chapel

Holy Mass is celebrated daily on the Tekakwitha Property; either in the Friary Chapel or in the St. Peter Chapel according to the season of the year. Also, special prayers are offered to Almighty God each day to obtain, if possible, the happy conclusion of the cause of Catherine Tekakwitha, "The Lily of the Mohawk."

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Starting with the first Sunday in June and continuing through to the last Sunday in September inclusive, Holy Mass is celebrated in St. Peter's Chapel at 10:00 A.M., D.S.T. When groups of pilgrims are present, a special Sunday afternoon service is conducted, providing advance arrangements have been made.

NOTRE DAME DE FOY

A statue of the Blessed Virgin, under the title "Notre Dame de Foy" was venerated in St. Peter Chapel by the Catholic Mohawk Indians at Caughnawaga (Gandaouaga) as early as 1675. This was the first public devotion to the Blessed Virgin in this section of New York State.

Because of this early devotion to Our Lady of Foy, the rector of the present St. Peter Chapel visited the shrine of Notre Dame de Foy, near Dinant, Belgium, in 1946 and obtained the consent of the Bishop of Namur that an exact copy of the original statue should be carved of oak and a particle of the original statue inserted in the base of this replica. He also requested that a second copy be made for the Shrine of the Martyrs at Auriesville, N. Y. Both of the oak statues arrived at Tekakwitha Friary on January 29, 1948.

The Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, D.D., Bishop of Albany, N. Y., on February 23, 1948, granted permission to introduce a devotion in honor of our Blessed Lady under the title of Notre Dame de Foy for the purpose of obtaining the intercession of the Blessed Virgin for the happy conclusion of the cause of the Venerable Catherine Tekakwitha.

It may also happen that the faith of some present-day Catholics will be stirred and strengthened even as was the fervor of the Catholic Mohawk Indians rekindled in the days when Father Bruyas, S.J., recorded his account of the effect of the first devotion to Our Lady of Foy which was practised here in the mission among the Mohawks.



THE MOHAWK-CAUGHNAWAGA MUSEUM

On April 30, 1947, work was started on the ground floor under St. Peter Chapel to provide a suitable place for the establishment of a needed museum and assembly hall. The project was sufficiently advanced to permit the formation of a museum in 1948. Later, progress justified the application for a charter of incorporation under the Education Laws of the State of New York. On April 22, 1949, the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York, Education Department, granted a Provisional Charter (No. 5727) whereby The Mohawk-Caughnawaga Museum came into existence as a corporation. The final Absolute Charter (No. 6478) was granted on September 25, 1953.

The museum serves both as a repository for the preservation of historical and archaeological material pertaining to the Mohawk Valley Indians and Colonial settlers as well as a center where such material is studied and correlated.

All business and management of The Mohawk-Caughnawaga Museum are regulated by a Board of Trustees, an Advisory Board and an Executive Committee according to a duly adopted constitution and by-laws.

The museum is a non-profit corporation and is dependent upon free-will offerings for its support.

Communications pertaining to the museum should be addressed to The Mohawk-Caughnawaga Museum, Box 6, R.D. 1, Fonda, N. Y.

Address all Shrine communications to:

THE FRANCISCAN FATHERS

TEKAKWITHA FRIARY

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