

PRINCESS TEKAKWITHA IS HONORED



Father Lalonde, of the Caughnawaga Parish Church, blessing the shrine built to the memory of Kateri Tekakwitha, "Lily of the Mohawks" during a ceremony that took place at the reserve yesterday. To the left may be seen a new statue of the good Katherine, made according to the type of her day, Chief Poking Fire says, rather than the features of present day Mohawks. Gazette Photo (Copyright Reserved).

Wayside Shrine to Indian Maiden Is Blessed at Caughnawaga Rites

A wayside shrine, built to the memory of Kateri Tekakwitha, "Lily of the Mohawks," a young Indian girl who died April 17, 1680, and whose beatification is sought, was blessed yesterday afternoon at Caughnawaga during a ceremony that began with a religious service and continued with a pow-wow.

Chief Poking Fire and many Indians attended the ceremonies, and there was also a good number of pale-face visitors.

Kateri Tekakwitha, born near Aurisville, New York, and baptized there at the age of 16, came to the Jesuit Mission at Caughnawaga after being brought up by her uncle following her parents' deaths. She was soon recognized as a very religious girl. Shortly after her death at the age of about 24, miracles began to happen which suggested her claim to sainthood.

The shrine is a beautiful structure, built of stones taken from the St. Lawrence. About the face of it, flowers are growing in a rock-garden effect. Beneath the Sacred Heart statue to the right of the entrance, water flows down over the

rocks, symbolizing, Chief Poking Fire said, the Lachine Rapids. The approach to the whole is of cedars planted out on one side, while on the other is the Long House, built just last year.

The roof of the shrine inside slopes back to the altar, which is faced with stones, each of which has the name of an Indian family behind it. Two of them were brought from the Holy Land, the one by Lady Roddick, who attended the ceremony.

Father Lalonde, in blessing the shrine, said that while the Bishop had praised the initiative of the Caughnawaga Indians in this good work, he had thought it better not to attend the ceremony himself lest it suggest that the work was identified with the Church itself, rather than just the local group. "It should be remembered," Father Lalonde said, "that we are not consecrating a shrine to Katherine, for she has not yet been made a saint, but rather that we are consecrating this shrine to the service of God, with the hope that it will help toward her early beatification."

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Church Interests and Activities

CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS HONOR KATERI TEKAWITHA

Open-air Altar for Mohawk Girl Who May Be Canonized This Year

In the Indian Village of Caughnawaga under the direction of Chief Poking Fire, tribal head, an elaborate open-air altar is rising, featuring a carved statue of Kateri Tekawitha—Mohawk Indian maiden who died more than 250 years ago and who, it is expected, will be canonized this summer.

The altar is built of stones taken from the bed of the St. Lawrence River and has as its focal point a statue of St. Francis Xavier. The carved figure of Kateri Tekawitha—the Lily of the Mohawks—will be placed in front of the altar.

Carefully preserved in a vault at the mission church are the bones of this Indian girl and to these relics many cures have already been ascribed.

The lengthy processes which precede the granting of sainthood have been started in Rome and the entire Catholic hierarchy of the continent has supported the proposal in letters to the Holy Father.

The site of the last remains of Kateri Tekawitha—also known as the Little Flower of North America—is a veritable shrine of Indian and early Canadian missionary history.

The bones are kept in the mission house adjoining the church proper. This building is in excellent condition and was constructed in 1720 by missionary fathers from France. Each year thousands of people from Canada and the United States visit the site. Text-books, crucifixes, sacred paintings and even the records of the missionary fathers are preserved in the vaults.

Among the relics is one of the earliest known examples of the wampum belt. It is over three feet long and seven inches wide, and on it is worked a sermon in Christian-

ity. Offers of many thousands of dollars for this belt have been refused by the fathers.

"The Lily of the Mohawks" was born in Glen Montgomery County, New York, in 1656 and was orphaned at the age of four by a smallpox epidemic. She was adopted by an uncle, a bitter opponent of the Christian missionaries. Despite her uncle's opposition she was determined to become a Christian and was baptized on Easter Sunday, 1676.

She suffered many hardships for her faith, refusing to marry at her uncle's order at the age of eleven and later bearing the taunts of her fellow-tribesmen when she made a vow of chastity—a step unprecedented among the Indians.

In 1680 she died, her frail constitution and the ravages of smallpox being instrumental in her demise.

In 1884 a conference of United States bishops proposed her for beatification and in 1931 the move assumed a concrete form with the appointment of a postulator to advance her cause.

The bones of Kateri lay in a grave at the foot of the Lachine Rapids from the time of her death until 1715. Then the grave was opened and some of the bones taken to Caughnawaga church. Others were given to the Indian reservation of St. Regis. These were destroyed in a fire more than 90 years ago so that those at Caughnawaga are the only ones left.

If the postulator is successful these bones will be sent to Rome. After the beatification they will be returned to Caughnawaga where a shrine will be erected to the "Lily of the Mohawks."

Two paintings of the Indian girl are to be seen in the mission house.



This picture of Kateri Tekawitha, "Lily of the Mohawks," is taken from a very old painting done by Rev. Father Chauchetiere, S.J., who was the confessor of the Iroquois maiden. Her tomb is at the Caughnawaga reservation.





WAYSIDE SHRINE OF KATERI TE KAKWITA, "THE LILY OF THE MOHAWK TRIBE",
CAUGHNAWAGA, QUE. CANADA. - 3.