

DEVOTION to the CRUCIFIX



The Crucifix

ACCORDING to an entry in the diary of Fra Leopoldo, O.F.M., for September 10, 1906, Our Lord told him that devotion to the Crucifix would be "a real blessing for the Brothers of the Christian Schools: those lay religious who love Me very much; and whom, on My part, I cordially esteem." Started in Turin by Brother Teodoro, F.S.C., that devotion soon spread through Italy. In 1950, the Gonzaga Institute presented to the Motherhouse a large "Christus" in Tyrolese wood, the work of the Italian sculptor Vincenzo Vinatzer, and a copy of the Crucifix of Assisi. Hung on the wall of the Chapel in a rather dark corner, the holy Crucifix did not attract any too great attention. Lately, however, that untoward situation has been remedied. The Crucifix now stands

out against a wall faced with Sienna marble, and rests above a white marble altar in an alcove modeled in a style that is in perfect keeping with the sombre, yet harmonious lines of the large Chapel. Frequently, in that cosy little Oratory, Holy Mass is offered, and the personnel of the Motherhouse gather there and quietly meditate on Jesus Crucified.

KATERI: Future Saint of the Laity

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ALTHOUGH the name Kateri Tekakwitha is familiar to many Canadians, the remarkable aspects of her short life are not. While people are accustomed to the marvellous in the lives of the Great Saints, nothing about Kateri will appear very extraordinary unless a distinct effort is made to understand the environment in which she lived. Though short and simple, Kateri's life holds a deeper meaning for the present-day Christian whose life, in a world so frequently adverse to things spiritual, bears a resemblance to that led by the "Glory of the Mohawks."

Her Early Life. Kateri was born, in 1656, in the Mohawk village of Ossernenon, the present site of Auriesville, New York. Her father was a pagan Chief who had espoused a captive Algonquin from the Three Rivers Settlement, Canada. Kateri's mother had been brought up a Christian by the French. Unfortunately, that fact loses any explanatory value for Kateri's later achievements, when it

is learned that the smallpox epidemic, 1660, took the lives of Kateri's parents and her only brother. The little girl, adopted by her Uncle Iowerano, Chief of the Turtle Clan, had a disfigured face and poor eyesight from the effects of the smallpox. In 1666, the Carignan-Salières French regiment, under de Tracy, invaded the Mohawk territory and destroyed the village in which Kateri lived. The following spring, three Blackrobes accompanied the Indian peace emissaries who had been sent to Quebec, and spent three days in the Long House of Kateri's Uncle. Kateri, assigned the task of waiting on the priests, made her first real contacts with Christianity. She was much impressed by the Fathers' tales of Rawennio, the Lord and Master of the world. A curious fact now enters into her life: the priests who had had dealings with her for a period of over ten years were impressed by her manners, docility, and modesty; yet, Kateri never gave

and completely. A noun is not considered correct unless the nominative and the genitive are written out in full, and the gender indicated. For verbs, the four principal parts are required, written in full. Endings not attached to a root are meaningless and should never be accepted, even in routine vocabulary work. Pupils learn from marking one another's papers, and thus save the teacher a mechanical correcting chore.

No matter how carefully a teacher has taught and drilled the new words, there will be errors to cope with following these tests. Those with only one error can be dealt with individually during one of the seat exercises. If a pupil can recite correctly in five minutes all the work he missed in the test, he should be allowed to leave. He may surprise himself by the speed with which he learns the words once he has put his mind to it, and his sense of achievement will be a better incentive to further effort than the spite that wells up when he is obliged to write Latin words until four-thirty.

Translation into Latin. The final test of a pupil's proficiency in Latin is his ability to express ideas in the new medium. This exercise is going to present the greatest challenge the pupil will meet with in the lesson. All his knowledge of syntax and vocabulary will be on call as he works through a paragraph, or an exercise of sentences. It is at this stage in the pupils' work that the teacher must exercise great patience and sympathetic understanding. He must not expect too much at first, even from his best pupils. Some of the words in the English sentence, such as the nouns, the verbs, the adjectives, or the participles will require complex analysis before one is able to arrive at a correct translation. Knowledge of the root word is only a small part of this process. The required number, gender, and case of the nouns and pronouns; the correct voice, mood, tense, number, and person of the verbs, as well as the complete agreement of the adjectives and participles, must all be deduced from the internal, or/and end, inflection of the individual word. The result is a compact, logical mode of expression which eventually appeals to the genuine student, but which is demanding, and can be discouraging to a beginner.

It is not the first few exercises which cause trouble. Here the sentences are elementary in

structure, and the novelty of the subject helps to keep things running smoothly. However, in the early exercises, stress should be laid on recognizing the subject-verb-object (completion) relationship within the sentence. This emphasis should be maintained throughout the course in all translation work. These essentials will be present in the more involved sentences and they will always serve as a method of attack when the work becomes more difficult.

After a few lessons, when the translation work becomes more complex, the teacher will have to give more help in this part of the lesson. When an exercise is based on particularly difficult grammar, he may find it necessary to do the translation on the blackboard before giving it as a written assignment. If possible, he should get the form of each word from the class orally. In giving answers, the pupils have their texts open before them, but they are not allowed to make a copy of the correct translations. All this time, students have a chance to air their difficulties, and to see the correct form before they wander into too many blunders by themselves. A simpler form of preparation for a written exercise is to go over it orally before it is assigned, and to deal mainly with the difficulties brought up by the class.

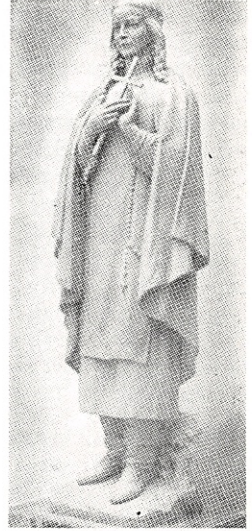
One final suggestion: in evaluating the translation work of the pupils, teachers should not be too exacting at first. The pupil should be given credit for all that he has right. Too often, the correction of Latin tests becomes the negative process of deducting for errors. If the number of those passing Latin tests is consistently below the norm, authorities place the blame either on the teacher or on the test — not on the pupil. It is wise for the teacher of a first year Latin class to be realistic. The test and the marking should take into account the fact that the candidates are taking their first steps in a new language, meeting five declensions with their variations, most of the indicative verb forms, and a system of inflected adjectives, not to mention the vocabulary and the syntax rules that have accumulated.

them any open acknowledgement of her interest in Christianity.

Her Refusal to Marry. Every Indian maiden was expected to marry a young brave who would support her aging family. As a bridegroom would be a most welcome addition to the Long House family Kateri's guardians took great pains to make a suitable match for their child. Yet, in spite of their repeated direct efforts and their recourse to various ruses, Kateri's aunt and uncle could not induce her to marry. Kateri's steadfast objection to marriage permeates the whole story of her life; therefore, it is revealing to speculate on her reasons for refusal. Although suffering from the ravages of smallpox which encouraged her to lead a retired life, Kateri was such an outstanding worker among the young girls that many a youth would gladly have taken her as his spouse. In addition, there is no record that she had any aversion to the trials and joys of married life; and, as yet, she could have had no concept of Christian virginity. The only satisfactory answer to the mystery of her refusal to marry lies in the realms of Divine Providence. Even while she was still a pagan, God seems to have set her aside for a special mission among her people.

Persecution. Although a Blackrobe had been labouring in her village for several years, it was not until the year 1675 that Kateri opened her heart to a priest. Presumably, her hesitation was due to the opposition of her pagan uncle. One day, Father de Lamberville was passing the Long House where Kateri dwelt when an irresistible urge to stop and enter that forbidding cabin took hold of him. Providentially, Kateri was at home recovering from a foot injury. "Kateri could not conceal her joy at seeing him. Even the presence of the three listening women did not deter her from telling the priest that she had wished to speak to him before now, but that she dared not go to seek him. An ardent longing for the faith of her mother was growing rapidly within her. The obstacles were great; but now she would disregard them" (Buehrle). Realizing that he had found a treasure, the Jesuit missionary arranged that Kateri attend prayers and instruction without any interference from her family. She was baptized on Easter Sunday, 1676. "Her life now had a purpose, and with undeviating speed she moved toward it every moment of the day" (Buehrle). This does not imply that life was easy for her: the lax morals and customs of her Tribe were no

incentives to holiness. As her aunt found it hard to understand why she would not work in the fields on Sunday, the family initiated a planned persecution. One day, while Kateri was sitting alone in the cabin, a brave with tomahawk in hand rushed in and shouted: "Christian, renounce your faith, or I will kill you!" One glance at the unruffled Tekakwitha was enough to unnerve the attacker, who fled in terror. It was at this time that an aunt of Kateri informed the priest of a supposed incestuous relationship between Kateri and her uncle. Wasting little time to disprove the accusation, the priest confronted Kateri, who told him that this was a small trial in comparison to the sufferings of the Saviour. Both Kateri and her spiritual guide soon realized that an atmosphere more congenial to her progress had to be found.



Lily of the Mohawks

Her Flight. About 1670, the Mission of Saint Francis Xavier was established across the river from Montreal near the present village of Caughnawaga, and soon became the centre of a fervent Indian population. In the autumn of 1677, while her uncle, Lowerano, was on a trading expedition to Fort Orange, Kateri fled her village in the company of two Christian Indians. That flight became dramatic when Lowerano set off in pursuit; but, by a simple ruse, the three fugitives were able to evade him. To Father Cholenc, at St. Francis, Kateri bore a letter from Father de Lamberville, which read in part, "I send you a treasure; guard it well."

The Mission. As life in the "Praying Castle of the St. Lawrence" agreed with Kateri, she quickly advanced in the virtues of humility, penance, and poverty; and, at Christmas, she made her First Holy Communion. In Caughnawaga, Kateri lived with Anastasia, an elderly woman from her native village who, years before, had been a friend of her mother. When Anastasia suggested to Kateri that she follow tradition and marry, she was quite astonished to hear Kateri refuse. In her anxiety, she had recourse to Father Cholenc,

who agreed to speak to the young girl. The priest was gravely puzzled as to the human causes of her aversion to marriage. Life as a celibate was a state so utterly unknown among the Indians that even the missionaries did not expect it of them. However, Kateri hastened to assure her confessor: "My resolution has been made for a long time . . . I will never have any other spouse but Jesus Christ" (Lecompte). The priest's astonishment and his gratitude to God for such a penitent may well be imagined. At the Mission, Kateri formed a deep spiritual friendship with a young widow, Marie Thérèse. Together, they paid a visit to the struggling settlement of Montreal. Marguerite Bourgeoys, the leading spirit in Ville Marie, ". . . perceived that her two guests from Caughnawaga were unusual, even among so fervent a group as the Christians of the Praying Castle" (Lecompte).

Fulfillment. On the Feast of the Annunciation, 1679, Kateri's wishes were fulfilled when she was permitted to take a vow of perpetual virginity. A moment's reflection places this simple act in its true perspective. Kateri was the first Christian virgin of the Mohawk Indians. By her devotion to Christ in the Holy Eucharist and to His Most Blessed Mother, she was a model of fervour

to all the other Christians. However, persistent ill-health, combined with a life of penance, proved too much for her frail constitution. Before her death, on April 17, 1680, Kateri was granted the extraordinary privilege of having the Holy Viaticum brought to her in her cabin. At her death, ". . . the inner beauty lay revealed and was there for all to see" (Buehrle). With simple faith, the Indians treasured as relics the articles she had used. Two Frenchmen passing her cabin remarked that the young woman was sleeping most peacefully. After they had been informed that Kateri was dead: "Amazed, the Frenchmen turned back into the lodge, knelt at her feet, and prayed" (Buehrle).

Epilogue. Devotion to Kateri spread rapidly by word of mouth, and she is frequently mentioned in contemporary and later correspondence as the "Protectress of New France." Innumerable cures and appearances are attributed to her. The Mission of St. Francis still remains in Caughnawaga, and it now shelters the remains of its most illustrious Alumna in the small shrine-museum there. On January 3, 1943, the late Pope Pius XII signed the decree "declaring heroic the virtues of the Servant of God, the Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha."

A SOCIETY for TEACHERS of RELIGION

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THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING of the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine will be held at the La Salle Hotel, Chicago, on April 18-19, 1960. The two-day programme offers an impressive agenda, studded with arresting topics and famous names. The President of the Society, this year, is the Reverend Brother Alban of Mary, F.S.C., President of Manhattan College, N.Y. Apart from the General Meetings, there are no fewer than 28 "groups dynamics" sessions. Indeed, it promises to be an attractive gathering for Teachers of Religion.

Perhaps you have not heard before of this powerful organization. It originated in 1953, at Washington, D.C., but it has grown so rapidly that, by 1958, it had members from 231 of the 253 Catholic colleges in the United

States. The Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Convention, 1959, list the following Canadian colleges as having members: Christ the King College, London; Mount St. Vincent College, Halifax; St. Mary's University, Halifax; and, St. Joseph's University College, Edmonton. The organization has members in such distant places as Rome, Rangoon, Bolivia, Australia, Hawaii, and Belgium.

The main purpose of this Society of Religion Teachers is "to assist teachers in imparting to college students adequate religious instruction well integrated with the remainder of the curriculum." Other, more immediate objectives are: the exchange of information, the formulation of proper content of courses, the fitting in of Sacred