The Lily of the Mchasks

The dark-skinned, p_ock-marked girl who may well become the first nativeborn American saint last week made another step on the long road to canonization. In a public consistory in Rome, Pope John XXIII heard church lawyers make a petition for the bestification of Reteri Tekakwitha.

She was born JOh years ago in the Iroqueis village of Ossermenon, now Auricaville, NoY. Her father, Nenheronaus, was a Mohauk chief, her mother, Mahauta, an Algonquin whom the Hohauks took captive. Smallpox killed both her parents and left four-year-old Tehakwitha ("One who puts things in order") badly scarred and weakened for life.

Her uncle, Greegongo, who brought her up, was chagrined when at the age of eight she refused to be betrothed to the young Indian he had picked out for her. He was outraged when, at the age of 20, she was baptized by Jesuit Missionary Father Jacques de Lamberville, who gave her the Christian name Catherine—in Indian, Materi. Her Mohawk family and their friends gave the young Christian a hard thee. Her refusal to work on Sunday made it a fast day—II you won't work, you won't eat, "said her aunts. Uncle Chregongo encouraged drunken braves to molest her; children called her names and threw stomes at her. Father de Lamberville contrived to spirit her away from the village to a missionary settlement in Canada.

The result was a chase along the Irequois trail to Lake Champlain—Onsegongo in swift-necessived pursuit with three bullets in his musket. Kateri eleded him, however, and spent the rest of her short life emong the Christian Indians of Caughrawaga, near Laprairie in Consda.

Here, on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1679, "the Lily of the Mohawks" consecrated her virginity to God and, in tribute to the Virgin Mary, whose color is blue, she changed her customery scarlet blanket for a blue one. Until the missioneries stopped her, Kateri went to Indian extremes of sceeticles—lashing and branding herself, walking barefoot in the snow, putting but embers between her toes and sleeping in brandles. She was soon venerated by her fellow Christian Indians as a living saint, and when she died at Zh, they tone up her cicthes for relice. Ever since, a mounting list of cures and worders has been attributed by both Indian and white Catholics to her intercession. Said Pope Pins XI: "Her life itself is a mixecle."

(The Indians of the Five Wetions "Mohawk, Onoide, Onoidege, Cayuga, Senson" were called Iroquele by the Franch because they allegedly closed conversations with the words hiro "I have spoken" and koud "with joy" or "with serrow", depending on the tone of voice used).

Time, January 27, 1961, page 50.

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(The Indians of the Five Mations "Mohawk, Omeida, Onoudaga, Cayuga, Someca" were called Iroquois by the French because they allegedly closed conversations with the words hiro "I have spoken" and kend "with joy" or "with sorrow", depending on the tone of voice used).