

# Father Is an Indian Chief

Rev. Michael Jacobs, S.J. is a most eloquent speaker when it comes to speaking about the love of God and His Blessed Mother. Moreover, he is the only full-blooded Mohawk Indian Jesuit priest in the world. He is a direct descendent of the people who once roamed the Mohawk Valley and gave the world the Indian Princess, Ven. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680). The relics of Kateri are kept at St. Francis Xavier Mission, Caughnawaga, Canada, where many of the Christian Indians were to escape to preserve their new found faith.

St. Francis Xavier Mission was the first mission founded by the Jesuits for the Iroquois converts and dates back to 1667.

The child, Michael, was given the Indian name of WIS- HE KAR- HA IEN- TON . . . which meant . . . "Michael of the Woods." Somehow his mother and father, Annie and Joseph Jacobs, felt that this indeed was a fitting name for their son who loved nature so very much . . . who enjoyed the woods and cool waters . . . all of nature's glories created by God. As he grew he often thought of the life of St. Isaac Jogues, the Patron Saint of the Christian Iroquois Indians. He wanted to be like him . . . this Saint of great courage. Michael attended Indian schools of the Caughnawaga Reserve, until he was sixteen. Then Michael Jacobs decided he must be a priest. He went to the Jesuit Sacred Heart College, Sudbury, Ontario. When he was twenty years old he proudly entered the Jesuit Novitiate in Montreal, Canada . . . for twelve years he went through the ordinary Jesuit formation and studies.

Many friends and relatives were present for his ordination, July 1st, 1934 in the Mission Church of Caughnawaga. This was where he was bap-

tized, where he received his first formation in the Christian life. He was ordained by the late Bishop William Forbes of Ottawa, Ontario. It was this same Bishop who had also blessed the



**Rev. Michael Jacobs, S.J., full-blooded Mohawk Indian**

marriage of Father Jacob's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Jacobs.

The youthful priest worked in the Mission of St. Francis Xavier for two years. Then in May, 1938 he was sent

to St. Regis Mission, 80 miles west of Mohawk Indians, descendants of the shores of the St. Lawrence River, opposite Cornwall, Ontario.

This is the place where Father Michael has worked for over thirty years. There are about 4,100 Indians on the reserve now. They are practically all Mohawk Indians, descendants of the first converts of the Five Nations of the Iroquois of the 17th century.

Father has many friends, because of his exemplary faith and many good deeds. He ordinarily speaks every year at the Coliseum in the Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville, N.Y. on Indian Weekend . . . usually the first weekend in September. People come from many distant places to hear him. They are especially delighted when he tells the story of the martyrs . . . the Indians . . . and Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha. Again the days when the first white man settled here comes alive. Many of his Indian parishioners go with him to Auriesville on Indian Weekend, particularly his teenage dancers, who usually dance as only the Indians can, to the joy of all who gather for this event. Indeed, Father Michael Jacobs, S.J. is a true leader of his people of the noble blood of the Iroquois Nation.

—By Mary-Eunice

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August 15, 1972 Father Michael "Karhaienton" Jacobs, S.J. will celebrate his Golden Jubilee as a Jesuit, for that was the day he entered their Novitiate in 1922. On the same day the Blessed Virgin cured his Mother who had been sick for a year having gained no relief from doctors of medicine. It was the Feast of the Assumption. A procession through the village of Caughnawaga was in progress when a thunder storm broke out followed by a torrential downpour. The priest and the altar boys, Michael was one of them, entered the nearest home with the statue of the Blessed Mother which they were carrying. It was Mrs. Jacob's house. Mrs. Jacobs was able to venerate the statue and pray to the Blessed Mother for her cure. The priest, Father Samuel Granger, blessed Mrs. Jacobs and from that day on she got better. On this occasion, too, the Blessed Mother told Mrs. Jacobs that her son would be a priest, a secret kept from Michael until he was a Jesuit priest. Mrs. Annie Jacobs died at 95, December 24, 1969.