

Catholic delegation visits Kateri

hoping for July canonization

eg Horn

Kateri Tekakwitha received some very interesting visitors last week. Several priests and a cardinal along with the Pope's ambassador to Ottawa came to see the shrine at Kateri Tekakwitha. They came to speak to Father Cyr and Jacques Berthelet, who is

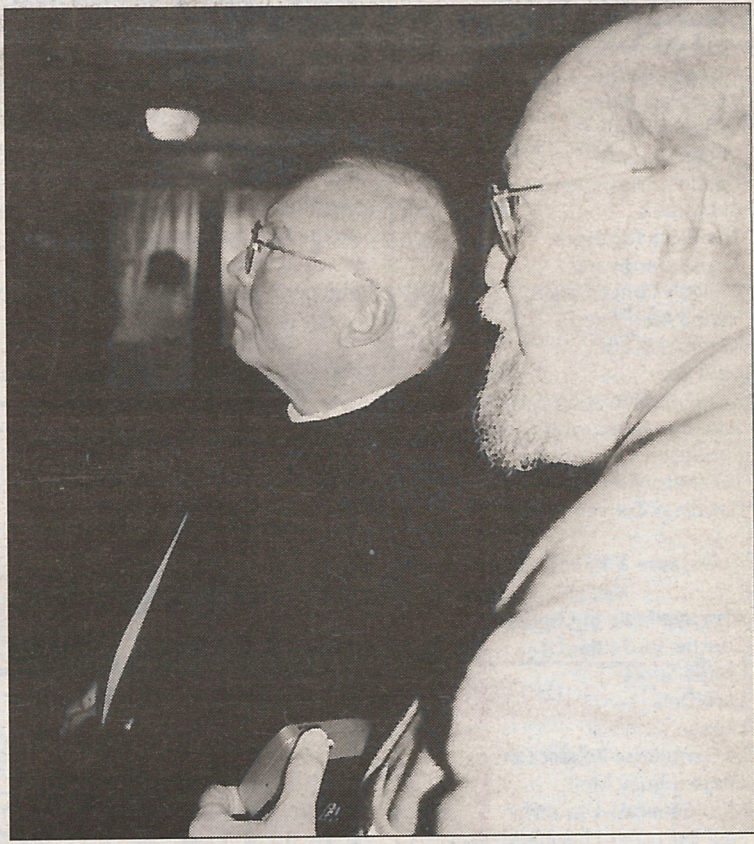
the Bishop of Longueuil, under which Kahnawake falls, about Kateri.

The group explained that it too has been championing the cause to have Kateri declared a saint by the Catholic church. The delegation included Cardinal Stafford, Father Frocoli and Luigi Ventura, who is the Apostolic Nuntius - or the Pope's ambassador in

Ottawa.

Father Frocoli explained that as a part of the week-long World Youth Day in Toronto this upcoming July, where hundreds of thousands of young people are expected, they would like to have Kateri's remains present. Frocoli said that the remains would be in Toronto for the duration of the festivities only. The purpose would be to give the greatest number of people the opportunity to pray before Kateri's remains.

They are also hoping that Kateri will reach sainthood by



Cardinal Stafford listening to Father Cyr during a brief tour of the St. Francis Xavier Mission last week.

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Bishop here for Kateri Tekakwitha

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the time of the World Youth Day in late July.

The bones of Kateri would be on display at the St. Anne's Church of Toronto, which is a Native parish. Frocoli said that this parish was extremely excited and began preparing for Kateri's arrival, but it was told to wait until permission was granted from Kahnawake to bring Kateri's remains.

Cardinal Stafford said that by doing so he is hoping it will have the same effect as when the World Youth Day festivities were held in Paris in 1997. At this time the remains of Ste. Therese were brought to Paris and many people got to pray before her.

Stafford was then told that the community may not be agreeable to the idea of moving her remains, even for a short time. He was also told that even if the community agreed to the short move, it may not be possible, because the remains are sealed in a marble tomb, and have been since the early 1970s.

He replied that if it would cause any problems, he would not ask, because Stafford said he does not want to cause any controversy.

"If it would cause controversy, then it would not be done," Stafford said.

Outside of Kahnawake, the largest piece of Kateri's remains is in the possession of the Bishop of Chicoutimi, who has a rather large piece of Kateri's breast bone. Stafford was advised that if it doesn't work out here, he should go that route.

Stafford said he feels it is important to have Kateri at the World Youth Day because when she died she was only 24 and "was the first North American to be beatified."

Whatever the decision, the delegation said it will continue to pray for her canonization and she will still be a large part of the World Youth Day festivities. ■



Cardinal Stafford praying before Kateri's tomb.