

THE EASTERN DOOR

KANIEN'KEHA:KA NA'KON:KE RONTEHNHOHANONHNHA

KAHNAWAKE MOHAWK TERRITORY

COMMUNICATIONS

Vol. 16 No. 13

April 13, 2007

\$1.00

Kateri Relics stolen from church

JORDAN STANDUP
THE EASTERN DOOR

In the coming weeks, the St. Francis Xavier Mission will be holding special masses and other church events to honour Kateri Tekakwitha, however, the church will be without one of Kateri's relics, which had been stolen.

St. Francis Xavier Mission Priest Alvaro Salazar said that after returning from his home country of Guatemala last month, he was giving a tour of the church and museum to a group of Portuguese people. He recalled wanting to show them the relics,

and as he walked over to the display case where the relics were placed, he noticed that they were gone.

Salazar said he remembered seeing them before he left for his trip and wasn't sure where they had gone. He immediately called some church workers to ask if they had borrowed or moved the relics.

"No one knew where they were and that really worried me. At first, I thought maybe someone had taken them to pray to them and ask Kateri for something," Salazar said.

Continued on page 6



JORDAN STANDUP THE EASTERN DOOR
This is the glass case where Kateri's relics were on display at the St. Francis Xavier Mission.

Church still waiting for return of Kateri relics

JORDAN STANDUP THE EASTERN DOOR

St. Francis Xavier Mission Priest Alvaro Salazar will be without Kateri Tekakwitha's relics when the church holds special masses to honour Kateri throughout the rest of the month.

The relics are small pieces of Kateri's bones that are very significant to the church, and are used during special masses.

Salazar said he discovered that the relics were missing when he was giving a tour of the church to a group of Portuguese people on March 30, just after returning from a two-week trip to his home country of Guatemala.

He explained that he thought it would be a good idea to show the group Kateri's relics, which were on display in a glass case in the church museum.

Salazar said he was horrified when he realized that the relics were missing.

After speaking with all of the church workers,

Salazar said he was sure that no one within the church had borrowed the relics, so he decided to call the Kahnawake Peacekeepers.

The church has no idea exactly when the relics were taken, and does not know who could have taken them.

The first mass in honour of Kateri took place Tuesday evening.

Salazar had a few other relics that he was able to use during the mass, but he said the church would still like the others back.

Salazar told *The Eastern Door* that prior to him coming to the church, the relics were always stored away in the church.

Then, about a year ago, when the church began expanding its museum, Salazar thought it would be a good idea to put the relics on display for everyone to see and enjoy.

"There are people who come from across the world to the church here in Kahnawake just for Kateri, so I thought it would be nice to put the relics on display," Salazar said last week.

The church will be holding two more masses in honour of Kateri later this month, with the next one taking place this Sunday.

The mass will take place during regular Sunday mass hours, and will be followed by a special luncheon at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

The next mass will take place on Sunday, April 29, and will be followed by a short procession around the community.

Salazar explained that this is the last year that these masses will take place so close to Easter.

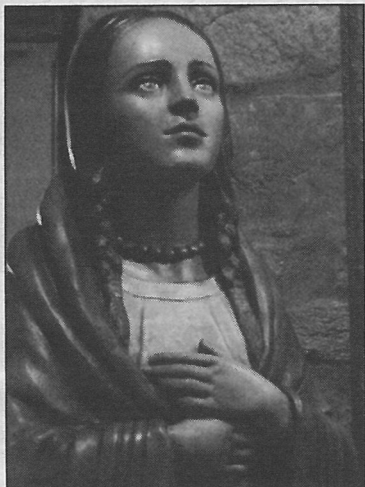
He said that next year the masses will most likely take place in mid-June.

The case is still under investigation by the Peacekeepers.

If anyone has any information on the stolen relics, they are encouraged to call the church at 450-632-6030, or the Peacekeepers at 450-632-6505.

Church wants relics returned

From page 1



JORDAN STANDUP THE EASTERN DOOR
A statue of Kateri Tekakwitha

Salazar and several other church workers met to discuss the situation, and when he was absolutely sure that no one at the church had moved or taken the relics, he decided to call the Kahnawake Peacekeepers.

"I didn't want to call the police right away because I was hoping that someone would return them, but the relics are so spiritually important to the church, so I decided to call, and I announced it at mass to let everyone know," Salazar said.

Salazar said that he has absolutely no idea who could have taken the relics, but thinks that they could have been taken while he was gone.

"I don't understand why anyone would do this. The relics are not just for one person. Kateri belongs to the people of Kahnawake, and so do her relics. They should be here at the church for everyone," Salazar said.

Salazar told THE EASTERN DOOR that if someone were to return the relics, he would not be upset with them, he would just be grateful that they were returned.

"I would not give their name

out to anyone. I would keep it to myself," Salazar said, "I am begging whoever took them to please return them. I have been praying for their return."

The case is currently under investigation by the Peacekeepers.

Salazar said he would love to have the relics returned before a special mass, which the church will be holding for Kateri on Tuesday, April 17, at 7 p.m.

The church will have a second mass in honour of Kateri on Sunday, April 22, which will take place during regular Sunday mass hours. That mass will be followed by a special luncheon at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

A third mass will be held at the church on Sunday, April 29, and a procession with a statue of Kateri will take place around the community.

Salazar said that this is the last year that these masses will take place so close to Easter. Next year, he said, the masses will most likely take place in mid-June.

"Everyone is welcome to come and join us for these masses," said Salazar, who is especially encouraging young people to take part.

"People from around the world come to the church here in Kahnawake because of Kateri. That just goes to show how special she is, and the people of Kahnawake should come and celebrate and honour her," Salazar said.

Salazar was hoping to use the stolen relics during the masses, but said he did have others at the church that he could use.

If anyone has any information on the stolen relics, call the church at 450-632-6030 or the Peacekeepers at 450-632-6505.