

## **Kateri Tekakwitha – Drawn to the Eucharist**

Albany Diocese Spring Enrichment, College of St. Rose, Albany, NY

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### **Born into conflict:**

North v: South of the St Lawrence River: The Geopolitical Landscape

American v Canadian Geography/Trade/Weapons

Mohawk v Algonquin; Dutch v French

French Catholic (Jesuit missionaries) v Dutch Reform Protestant v Indigenous Spirituality

### **Cultural Integration**

Mohawk Villages: Ossernenon (Auriesville), Andagoron (Randall), Teonnontogen (Sprakers).

Dutch: 1609 Henry Hudson sails the river; 1614 Albany founded; 1618 first alliance with Mohawks;

1623 Fort Orange built; 1634 Van Den Bogaert trades at villages, 1637 Arent VanCurler arrives: manages Van Rensselaer properties, and establishes Schenectady in 1661; 1642 Dutch Reform Pastor Megapolensis arrives in Albany; 1642 & 1646 French Jesuit missionaries are martyred at Auriesville; 1657 Jesuits visit Mohawks;

1667 Jesuit chapel built among Mohawks.

### **Braiding/Layering of Cultures:**

- Mohawks were integrating new elements from Dutch and French:
- Christianity, agriculture, travel, weapons, hunting, tools, food, sewing,
- Evidence by archeological digs.
- By mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Kateri was born in 1656):
- 1/2 to 2/3 of the population in the Mohawk Valley were not Mohawk

### **Torture**

- In Europe, used for: punishment, forced conversions, extract information; deterrent
- Among Iroquois: to obtain spiritual power; to ease anger and grief; break down the identity of the enemy.

### **Native Spirituality**

- Prayers to the Creator – the Four Directions
- Tobacco offerings to ancestors
- Game on hunts offer to gods
- Dream interpretation / enactments

### **Catholic Faith / “The Prayer” Through Tekakwitha’s Eyes:**

- Memories of her mother / Fr Simon Le Moyne, SJ
- Tales by the elders (oral /storytelling tradition) of Father Jogues – Did Kateri’s father his torture/ his martyrdom?
- Eavesdropping on Mass and novenas and Catechism lessons.
- Christian witness of the captive Algonquins and Hurons
- Did she find the crosses carved into trees by St. Isaac Jogues?

### **Catholic Liturgies**

- Rituals, postures, litanies, hymns & reading were strange but it was “storytelling”
- Adorned vestments and altar clothes / Iroquois beadwork, feathers, ribbons
- Candles and incense / sage and tobacco
- Sacramentals: rosaries, medals, crucifixes / amulets, fetishes, beads
- Teachings on celibacy (Tekakwitha refused to marry), love of enemies (she had an aversion to torture).
- Sacraments and religious orders: power.

### **Jesus:**

- God/Man, Savior, Martyr. She had seen tortured bodies.
- Pain/penance
- Torture transferred power
- Jesus is helpless but draws Tekakwitha to himself.
- Power of love, of life over death
- The power of God who did not want to leave us.

### **Eucharist**

- The offering of all of creation in the Offertory of the Mass
- Iroquois praise of the Creator: Prayer to the Four Directions, Creation story on a turtle
- There is no communion without sacrifice
- Unbloody sacrifice
- Through the priest ‘In Persona Christi’

### **The Mystery of the Holy Spirit and Conversion**

- Recognition from within – no resources, travel, communication
- Inspired/formed by the Holy Spirit
- Recognition of Truth / ‘primal remembrance’
- “Your sayings give us life! God speaks through you, and He tells us in our hearts what issues from your lips.” – the Huron to St. John de Brébeuf.

### **Power of the Seed**

- Blood/seed of truth, planted by Jesuits, Kateri grew from it.
- Sown in gentleness and power.
- The seed has its own innate power
- Sown in gentleness by the Jesuits, it grows of its own power.
- Conversion is usually a process/ Tekakwitha’s conversion took nine years.

### **Who can show me what is pleasing to God so that I may do it?**

- She didn’t go to the shaman, or to dream interpretation, or the matriarchs/clan mothers, or the festivals and rituals, or protestant missionaries.
- Sacraments, not rituals; the real, not the symbolic.
- She went to the Catholic priests to tell her the truth.
- The Truth of Jesus Christ completed what the spirituality already in her; “fullness of faith”

### **This is what drew her to Jesus, as revealed by Catholicism**

- Ultimate spiritual power and identity
- Love and forgiveness v retribution and torture
- Self-sacrifice v revenge
- The power of the Cross
- Bodily chastity v marriage or plural partners
- Liturgy and sacramental
- The Real Presence of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist

### **Devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist**

- First Communion on Christmas – her appearance was transfigured by it.
- ‘Denumbed with cold ‘sitting in the chapel with the Blessed Sacrament.
- Contemplative tears and sighs.
- The winter hunt away from the missions and the Eucharist was unbearable.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum

Veneremur cernui

Et antiquam documentum

Novo cedat ritui.

Down in adoration falling,

Lo! The sacred Host we hail;

Lo! O'er ancient forms departing,

Newer rites of grace prevail.

*Behold! I make all things new!* (Rev. 21:5)

“There arose the devotion she had to the Holy Eucharist and for the Passion of Our Savior. These two mysteries of the love of the same God, concealed under the veil of the Eucharist and his dying on the cross, ceaselessly occupied her spirit, and kindled in her heart the purest flames of love.” ~ Fr. Pierre Cholenec, S.J.

St Kateri Tekakwitha died on April 17, 1680. This was the Wednesday of Holy Week when these two great mysteries came to be: the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and the Cross on Calvary.

Misc. Quotes for Spring Enrichment Class 05/18/2018:  
***St Kateri Tekakwitha – Drawn to the Eucharist***

No man knows himself, if he has not looked at his soul in the light of the Host lifted above the ciborium.  
 ~ **François Mauriac, *Holy Thursday: An Intimate Remembrance.***

We have received the bread and wine from God, and it is offered back to Him. This sacrificial offering breaks against the rock of the Divine Self-Sufficiency and returns for the benefit of those who made the offering. This will return to us immeasurably elevated as the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

~ **Bishop Robert Barron, *The Catholicism Series (DVD), Episode 7: The Mystery of the Liturgy and the Eucharist.***

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:**

1333: Thus in the Offertory we give thanks to the Creator for the bread and wine, fruit of the earth and the vine.

1359: The Eucharist is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation.

There arose the devotion she had to the Holy Eucharist and for the Passion of Our Savior. These two mysteries of the love of the same God, concealed under the veil of the **Eucharist and His dying on the cross**, ceaselessly occupied her spirit, and kindled in her heart the purest flames of love.

~ **Fr Pierre Cholenec, SJ, re: St. Kateri Tekakwitha**

Allowing the light of the Gospel to encounter a culture, shining the light through a prism, as we turn the prism we are able to see all these different beautiful spots and different angles. That's what the light of the Gospel does. It enriches and shows the beauty of the culture that is already there.

~ **Bishop James Wall, Gallup, NM.**

The worthy traditions of the Indian tribes were strengthened and enriched by the Gospel message. . . .not only is Christianity relevant to the Indian peoples, but Christ, in the members of his body, is himself Indian.”

~ **Pope St. John Paul II at Martyrs Shrine in Midland, Ontario.**

. . . a kind of *primal remembrance of the good and the true*. . . is bestowed on us. There is an inherent existential tendency of man, who is created in the image of God, to tend toward that which is in keeping with God. . . .It is an inner sense, a capacity for recognition, in such way that the one addressed recognizes in himself an echo of what is said to him. If he does not hide from his own self, he comes to the insight: *this* is the goal toward which my whole being tends, *this* is where I want to go.

. . .This *anamnesis of the Creator*, which is *identical with the foundations of our existence*, is the reason that *mission* is both *possible* and *justified*. The Gospel may and indeed must be proclaimed to the pagans, because this is what they are waiting for, even if they do not know this themselves.

~**Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI: *Values in a Time of Upheaval***