

## **Morning Announcements and Prayers to Prepare for the Canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha**

Tony Cosentino, Renfrew County Catholic School Board. October, 2012

These stories and prayers have been written for use over a period of nine school days. If schools prefer to use them for a shorter period, the stories can be combined, using the prayers of any day.

### **Day One: Tuesday October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

#### **Introduction**

Good morning. This is our first of nine morning prayers to help us prepare to celebrate the canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha on Sunday October 21<sup>st</sup> by Pope Benedict XVI. On that day, she will be known as Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. Blessed Kateri is the first Aboriginal person in North America to be declared a saint by the Catholic Church. This is a joyous time for the whole Church! Let us listen and learn together about this wonderful new saint.

#### **Story**

Kateri Tekakwitha was born around 1656 at the Mohawk village of Ossernenon, in what is now New York State. Her mother's name was Kahenta. She was a Catholic Algonquin woman who was baptized and educated by French missionaries at Trois-Rivières, east of Montreal. Kahenta was captured by the Mohawks and adopted into their tribe. She married Kenhoronkwa, their chief and had two children – Tekakwitha, and a boy, whose name we do not know. The name *Tekakwitha* means, "she who puts things in order" or "she who advances and opens the way before her." Kahenta told her daughter Tekakwitha stories about Jesus, and probably sang her to sleep with Christian hymns. Tekakwitha's young heart must have found great joy in these experiences. The love for Jesus planted in her heart during these tender years would grow day by day and help her get through many hard times that lay ahead in her life.

#### **Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you planted the seeds of faith in Tekakwitha's heart through her mother's stories about Jesus. We too have heard the stories about Jesus from our families, priests, teachers and friends. Help us to grow in faith and to trust that you are walking with us each day through life's journey. May our hearts be always open to your message of love for us in Christ Jesus. We make this prayer to you in his name.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Day Two: Wednesday October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the second of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

### **Story**

When Tekakwitha was four years old, her mother and father and brother died of smallpox. It was a sad time for her village, because many people got sick and died. The smallpox left Tekakwitha with scars on her face. From then on, she was very weak, and her eyesight was poor. She went to live with the family of her uncle Lowerano, Mohawk chief of the Turtle Clan at Caughnawaga, and her aunt. Tekakwitha must have missed her mother and father and brother. Perhaps the seeds of faith she received from her mother let her know that Jesus was walking with her in her sorrow, and would never leave her.

### **Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, we ask you to make us strong in faith – to get us through the hard times, and to give us the joy of knowing we are your beloved sons and daughters. Lord Jesus, help us to remember that you are with us every day as we journey. Be our light in times of darkness and comfort us with your hope. May we, like Kateri, learn to place all our trust in you. We make this prayer in the power of your holy name.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Day Three: Thursday October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the third of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

### **Story**

Tekakwitha grew up in the lodge of her uncle and aunt. She helped her adopted family and others in the village with preparing food, gathering wood, making belts and clothing. She got along well with others, and was respected by the Mohawk women elders. Still, Tekakwitha preferred the quiet of the long house to the clan's feasts and celebrations. When she was thirteen years old, her family wanted her to get married, but she would not go along with their plans. Perhaps she sensed deep down inside that another path was being prepared for her in life. Meanwhile, she continued to joyfully work alongside the other women of her village. The seasons came and went, and Tekakwitha grew into a young woman who was ready to help others when she saw a need.

**Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you opened Tekakwitha's heart to help her family and neighbours in the service of love. Help us to see all the good you are doing in our lives. Give us hearts that are open to the needs of others, and help us to reach out to them in love. We make this prayer to you in Jesus' name.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Day Four: Friday October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012****Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the fourth of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

**Story**

When Tekakwitha was eighteen years old, a Jesuit priest named Father de Lamberville came to her village. Fr. de Lamberville felt drawn to look into the longhouse of Lowerano, Tekakwitha's uncle. There, he met Tekakwitha, who told him she wanted to be baptized. Lowerano gave her permission to take religious instructions from Fr. de Lamberville. Tekakwitha was baptized on Easter Sunday in 1576, when she was twenty years old. She took the Christian name Kateri, or Catherine. Members of her village treated her badly for becoming Christian like others who had begun converting and leaving Caughnewaga. But Kateri was in love with God, and very much loved her own people. Some villagers did not understand this. Some threw rocks and made threats against her and refused to give her food on Sundays because she would pray on that day rather than work. Despite everything, Kateri treated them with kindness. She knew that this is what Jesus would want her to do.

**Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you sent Fr. de Lamberville to help Tekakwitha grow as a follower of Jesus. We thank you for the people you put in our lives who have shown us God's love and taught us to grow in our faith. Open our hearts to treat one another with understanding and kindness, and to see Jesus in everyone. We make this prayer to you in His name.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Day Five: Monday October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the fifth of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

### **Story**

Kateri's heart was on fire with the love of God, but it was no longer safe for her in the village. She was not married, and had no one to protect her. Six months after her baptism, she left in secret with a visiting Christian Oneida chief named Garonhiague and his two Christian warrior companions. They travelled more than three hundred kilometers through the bush, across lakes and rivers to the Christian mission near Kahnawake, just outside of Montreal. When she arrived, she gave the leaders of the community a letter from Fr. de Lamberville that read, "I am sending you a treasure. Guard it well." There, at Kanawake, she stayed with a native Christian woman named Anastasia, who had been a friend of Kahenta, Kateri's mother. Kateri became a model of faith and holiness for Anastasia and the whole village. She spent much time in prayer, and desired more than anything to do God's will.

### **Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you sent people to lead Kateri out of danger, so that she could bloom and grow in faith, hope and love. Keep us safe from all that could harm us, and help us to treasure the gift of our faith you have given us through Jesus and his Church at Baptism. We make this prayer to you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Day Six: Tuesday October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the sixth of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

### **Story**

Kateri was at peace in her new village of Kahnawake. There, she spent much time in prayer, in the chapel before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, in the tabernacle on the altar. She made small crosses out of wood, and put them in trees to remind herself of Jesus and to inspire her to pray throughout the day. Kateri made many sacrifices and offered them to God for her people. Despite all that had happened to her, she loved them very much. She desired that all peoples know the joy and saving love of God that comes to us in Jesus, just as she had experienced.

**Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you filled Kateri's heart with an overflowing love for you and for her people. Grant that this same love might overflow in the small things we do for one another each day. Help us to never doubt that you are with us in every moment, to raise us up in the strength of your love. We make this prayer to you in Jesus' name.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Day Seven: Wednesday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012****Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the seventh of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

**Story**

Kateri was now known by all in Kahnawake as a holy and kind woman. She took part in daily Mass and prayers, and performed her chores around the village. She did her work with love, so that it became a prayer and a way for her to grow in holiness. Once, she went to Montreal, and saw a group of women living together who had dedicated their lives to serving God as religious sisters. Kateri returned and told the village priest she wished to start up a convent for native women, but was not allowed. She then asked if she could take a vow of chastity, to give her life to God as a single woman religious. On March 25, 1679, Kateri made solemn vow to live as a virgin Bride of Christ forever.

**Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you planted in Kateri's heart a desire to serve you in all things. Awaken our hearts to the vocation you have placed within us, and give us the courage to follow your call to married life, the single life, priesthood or religious life. We know you will give us what we need to follow the deepest desires of our hearts. We make this prayer to you in Jesus' name.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Day Eight: Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the eighth of nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

### **Story**

Less than a year after her vow to live as a Bride of Christ, Kateri's health became very poor. She had been received as a special member of a group of Native Christian men called the Brotherhood of the Holy Name. When Kateri became ill, the men from the Brotherhood stood guard at her home day and night. All had come to know her as the "precious treasure" that Father de Lamberville said she was, and the Brotherhood was there to protect her in her final days. Many people came to visit her: Priests brought her communion each day; native men and women came to have one last visit, and to hear the wisdom of this one whom they loved as a sister and respected as a saint.

### **Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, the people of Kahnawake loved and respected Kateri for the holiness and wisdom you planted in her heart. Help us to grow in love and respect for all those you send us to guide us in your ways – especially our elders, parents, grandparents, priests and teachers. May the good things they have given us take root in our hearts and bloom to give you glory in all things. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Day Nine: Friday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Introduction**

Good morning. Today is the last of our nine days of morning prayer to help us prepare for the canonization of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha on Sunday October 21<sup>st</sup>. Let us continue to listen and learn together about her life...

### **Story**

As Kateri lay sick in her bed, she knew that she would be soon leaving her life on earth for the joys of heaven. She asked that her best and most beautiful clothes be brought to her to wear. The women with her helped her get dressed for the great feast of heaven. She received holy communion and the Last Rites on her bed and not long after, died, surrounded by her friends. Her last words were: "Iesos Konoronkwa" which means, "Jesus, I love you." Within minutes, the scars from smallpox that had covered her face disappeared, and her face began to shine. Two French trappers saw her radiant face through the window as they were passing by. They entered the cabin, and were so moved that they

went out and built a beautiful wooden coffin for her to be buried in. The news went out to all the native villages in the area that their "saint" had died. After she was buried, people came to her grave, asking her to pray for them from heaven. She appeared to one of the village priests and many people reported that God had answered their prayers through the intercession of Kateri. Kateri's remains are now in a sealed marble tomb at Saint Francis Xavier Mission, at Kahnawake, near Montreal. Her tomb has been a place of pilgrimage for First Nations peoples and peoples from all over the world, who come to ask her prayers.

In February 2006, a five year old Aboriginal boy named Jake Finkbonner from the Lummi Nation, living in Washington State was healed of flesh-eating disease that had settled in his face and chest. His parish priest, Fr. Tim Sauer, had been called to the hospital where Jake lay, to give him the Last Rites. He encouraged Jake's parents to pray to Kateri to obtain his healing. As the flesh-eating bacteria moved across Jake's face, family members, schoolmates, parishioners and people all over the world began to pray to Kateri for Jake's recovery. Doctors felt that the disease was progressing so rapidly, that Jake would probably die. Then, a pendant and prayer card with Kateri's image on them was brought to his room and placed on his pillow beside him. Jake's mother said the prayer, and soon after, the aggressive disease stopped in its tracks. The Vatican sent doctors to investigate the healing, and after examining the evidence, declared it to be a miracle. This is the miracle the Church looks to in proclaiming Kateri a saint.

Kateri has come to be known as the "Lily of the Mohawks" because of her purity and virtuous life. She has been named by the Church as Patroness of the environment, nature and ecology.

This Sunday, Aboriginal peoples from all over North America will be in Rome, where Pope Benedict will proclaim Kateri Tekakwitha a saint. In her, we have another friend in heaven who will listen when we ask her for help. In proclaiming her a saint, the Church recognizes that Kateri is indeed in heaven in the company of the angels and saints. We, who belong to of the communion of saints through Baptism, can be sure that when we seek her help, she will pray with us and for us to Jesus for our needs.

### **Prayer**

Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O God our Creator, you raised up Kateri Tekakwitha to be a light for your people everywhere. We thank you for Kateri's life, and ask you to help us to follow her example – to grow in holiness, kindness and purity. May your grace continue to lead us, so that one day we might join Kateri in the company of the saints, to praise you forever. We ask you this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.