

This story is meant to be read aloud as a storyteller would tell it around the campfire.

SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Long Ago before the Europeans came to this country the land was still forest and belonged to many Indian Tribes.

Then the Europeans came from across the sea. Many of these people were greedy. They took the land for themselves and many long and bloody wars were fought while the Indians struggled to keep their hunting grounds safe for their people.

But the white people were not all greedy. Some of them were “Holy People” who came to bring the Good News to the Indian people who had never heard the name of Jesus.

It was about this time that Tekakwitha, a little Indian girl and daughter of a great Chief, was born in 1656 in the village of Ossernenon, near present day Auriesville.

Tekakwitha’s father was a brave young Mohawk who had captured her mother from an enemy tribe. He brought her to his own village as a slave but he fell in love with her and made her his wife.

Though she was lonely for her own Algonquin people, Kayenta was a good wife to this brave young chief. She had become a Christian when she lived among her own people and she missed the “Holy Men,” the French priests, who had taught her the Christian prayers. In the Mohawk Village the Chief did not allow her to pray in the Christian way. For the Mohawks practiced only their own religion. They prayed in the way they had always known, giving thanks in song and dance and asking favors of the spirit who ruled all creation and gave them this beautiful land for food and shelter. But they did not know of Jesus; the Son of the Great Spirit, who had become like us and who died a brave death as a sign of His love for all people.

Kayenta knew that the “Holy Men” spoke the truth when they told her people the story of Jesus. So she prayed in secret and when little Tekakwitha was born, Kayenta talked to her baby in her soft gentle voice. She told Tekakwitha the story of Jesus and of the “Holy Men” who had taught her the Christian prayers. And so little Tekakwitha first heard the name of Jesus when she was a baby tied to her cradleboard. The wind rocked the little papoose gently to sleep as her mother murmured her Christian prayers and made the Christian sign over her child.

Tekakwitha grew to be a playful little girl and soon there was a small baby brother to be sung to and rocked in his cradleboard. The Indian mother worked at the many tasks expected of an Indian woman and little Tekakwitha toddled after her, imitating her mother’s quiet ways and listening to her stories of the Algonquin people and of the “Holy Men” who lived among them. Tekakwitha’s father told stories of the Mohawk people and she learned to be proud of their brave deeds and their courage and patience in time of suffering.

When Tekakwitha was four years old, a terrible sickness came to the Village. Many people died from this terrible disease and finally the sickness came to Tekakwitha’s own family in the longhouse. Tekakwitha’s mother, father, and baby brother died very quickly and Tekakwitha lay sick for a long time. Her little face was covered in sores and she lost most of her eyesight but she recovered from the sickness. Her face was left marked from the sores and her eyesight was so poor, she often stumbled and bumped into things.

Tekakwitha was a lonely little girl without her mother and father and she missed playing with her baby brother. She missed her father’s strong arms and most of all she missed her mother’s soft voice and gentle ways.

When the other children of the Village went into the woods to gather herbs for medicine, Tekakwitha would have to stay behind for her eyesight was too poor to see well enough to hunt for herbs or to run and play in the dark forest. It was then that Tekakwitha would remember the things her mother told her of Jesus and the “Holy Men” who taught the Christian prayers. When she was left alone at her tasks, she would often say the name of Jesus in the same soft way of her mother. Because she was often alone she learned to be skilled at sewing and embroidery. She spent long hours learning how to soften brown leather for moccasins and leggings and she learned to work beads and porcupine quills into beautiful designs. She grew and learned the ways of an Indian girl and learned to know Jesus in the way an Indian girl could best understand. In the beauty of woods and sky and in the sound of the wind and rain, she spoke and listened to her mother’s God.

Tekakwitha did not stay in the longhouse after the death of her parents. An uncle came to bring her to his own home. He knew that some day she would marry and then there would be a strong, young brave to care for him when he was too old to hunt and provide for his family. The uncle was pleased with Tekakwitha as he watched her grow into a graceful, young maiden. Though her face remained marked from the sickness, she was tall and straight and made a pleasing appearance. Her long black hair was well-oiled and braided. Her clothing was skillfully embroidered and her well-fitted moccasins were soft and beautifully decorated. Her uncle thought she would make a good wife for she was gentle and quiet and every task was done well. But Tekakwitha had other plans for herself and though she was obedient to all that her uncle commanded, she knew that when the time came to be chosen by a brave, she would not marry any of them.

To make sure the sickness that had killed so many members of Tekakwitha’s tribe would be destroyed and no more people would die like her own relatives did, Tekakwitha’s uncle commanded that Ossernenon (Auriesville) be burned to the ground. The Indians then built a new village one mile farther west. This happened in 1660 when Tekakwitha was but four years old.

Six years later an army of white men from Canada burned down all the Mohawk villages on the Auriesville side of the river, including Tekakwitha’s. The Mohawks then moved to the other side of the river and rebuilt all the “Castles,” as the white men called these villages.

Tekakwitha’s new “Castle” was called “Caughnawaga.” It was near present day Fonda, where markers in the ground now show exactly where the fence around the Village and the Longhouses were. It is on the property in Fonda, NY, where she was baptized and “The National St. Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine” was later established.

She liked to laugh and her playful way of talking would make the other girls laugh. When they went to get water from the nearby spring, the girls would tease Tekakwitha about the young braves who sometimes came to join them. Tekakwitha would then run shyly back to her uncle’s longhouse.

When Tekakwitha was in her teens, the long and terrible wars between her people and the white men came to an end. In the long period of peace that followed, the “Holy Men” whom her mother had so long ago told her about, came to her village. Tekakwitha’s uncle did not trust these white men and although he told her to take care of their needs, he would not allow her to join them in the Christian prayer.

One day as Tekakwitha sat alone nursing a sore foot, one of the “Holy Men” came into her cabin. Tekakwitha could no longer keep back the longing that filled her heart. She told the priest of her mother’s words and of how she had kept them for so long. The priest was amazed to hear of Tekakwitha’s desire to hear the teachings of Jesus and to learn the Christian prayer. He

warned her that it would not be easy to be a Christian in her village and that her uncle would be very angry for he hated the Christian priests. But Tekakwitha could not wait or worry about these things and after a month of learning and praying, the priest told her she was ready to be baptized in the Christian faith.

Easter Sunday was the day chosen for Tekakwitha to begin her new life in the Christian way. The Indians loved to celebrate and the whole village prepared for this feast which would be more festive than any other for Tekakwitha, the daughter of a great chief, was to be baptized that day. After her years of waiting, Tekakwitha was baptized Kateri which was the Indian name for Catherine.

Kateri's uncle could not understand her refusals to marry and he began to treat her cruelly, sometimes refusing to feed her when she spent long hours in prayer. Kateri was made to perform many more tasks since there was no young man to care for her. Some of the children threw stones at her when she walked to the Christian Chapel to pray.

Kateri remained quiet and gentle in spite of her sufferings. One day she found a way to escape to a Christian village much farther away in Canada. Kateri did not want to leave her village or her people. She was a true Indian girl who loved the customs and ways of her people but she knew that God was asking her to help them by living a life closer to Him.

One day, when her uncle was away from the village, Kateri made the journey to the Christian village with the help of two Christian Indians. When her uncle returned to the village to find her gone, he immediately loaded a gun and sped after her. But Kateri was already far away and her uncle returned to the village in shame and disgrace.

Kateri lived only a few years in this peaceful village but in that short time she became known and admired by all for her unusual goodness and love for prayer.

Again Kateri fell sick and this time, worn out by her hard life, she never recovered. She died peacefully in 1680 whispering the name of Jesus as her mother had taught her so long ago when she was a tiny baby tied to her cradleboard. She was 24 years old.

For Kateri it had not been enough to hear the word of God. She remembered His name and put His words into practice every day of her life.

In 1980 Pope John Paul II beatified Kateri declaring her to be a "Blessed" (one step before being a Saint of the Church). And then on October 21, 2012 Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha became a canonized Saint of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI had approved the miracle needed for Kateri's canonization.

The authorized miracle dates from 2006, when a young boy in Washington state survived a severe flesh-eating bacterium. Doctors had been unable to stop the progress of the disease by surgery and advised his parents he was likely to die. The boy received the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick from a Catholic priest. As the boy is half Lummi Indian, the parents said they prayed through Blessed Kateri for divine intervention, as did their family and friends, and an extended network contacted through their son's classmates. A Catholic nun, Sister Kateri Mitchell, visited the boy's bedside and placed a relic of Kateri Tekakwitha, a bone fragment, against his body and prayed together with his parents. The next day, the infection stopped its progression. Now Saint Kateri Tekakwitha is the first Native American to receive the title *Saint*, and as such is now honored by all people as the "Lily of the Mohawks."

When we hear the story of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, we are reminded of the words of Jesus: "Happier are they who hear the word of God and Keep it." (Luke 11:28)

KATERI TEKAKWITHA MEDAL

For
Junior Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls

REQUIREMENTS

- A. The candidate must have been a Campfire Girl or Junior Girl Scout for at least one year and be at least in the fifth grade.
- B. The candidate must attend a Catholic school or parish religious instruction.
- C. Candidate must talk over with her Moderator (her Pastor, Pastoral Associate, Director of Christian Formation, or the Pastor's Designee) and also record the following information into her logbook. (Please use complete sentences.)

STEPS ON THE JOURNEY

1. God our Father

Saint Kateri lived very close to the earth and loved all of creation. She also knew that God is our loving Father and the creator of all things. We are like God when we love and when we create.

- A. Tell in your own words how we can be like God if we love. Name someone you love. Should we love all people? Even people we don't like?
- B. Tell in your own words how we are like God when we create. What things have you created? What did you create them out of? Who made the things used for your creating? For whom did you create these things? Why?

Moderator

Date

2. Prayer

Kateri loved to pray. There are many ways to pray. Sometimes we learn words to say by heart. Sometimes we talk to God in our own words. Sometimes our feelings of joy or sadness or nothing can be offered to God and become a prayer.

- A. What is a prayer you know by heart? Where did this prayer come from?
- B. Write down a little prayer you have made up in your own words.

- C. Sometimes when we see something beautiful or are glad that something has happened, or are even sad that something has happened, we can't think of words to pray with – so we just have to offer God the feeling in our heart, knowing that God can see it and understand. Tell of a time when you felt like this.

Moderator

Date

3. **Knowledge of the Faith**

It is important to know why we do certain things as Catholics.

- A. If you met someone who didn't know anything about Catholics (about what they believe and do) could you explain to them about Holy Communion? Pretend you are writing a letter to such a person in your logbook and explain what you believe about Holy Communion and why you receive the Sacrament?
- B. Pretend your friend answered that she like your first letter but now she wants to know about Baptism. Write another letter to her in your logbook and explain about Baptism.
- C. Now your friend has written back and said, "How luck you are to be a Catholic." Write a third letter to her telling her two reasons why you are glad to be a Catholic.

Moderator

Date

4. **The Blessed Mother**

Take the New Testament and read the story of Our Lady at the Annunciation in the Gospel of St. Luke 1:26-38.

- A. In this story Mary is asked to do something special for God. What is she asked and what is her answer?
- B. We should try to be like her and answer God in the same generous way when He asks things of us. How does God ask things of us? Is it through angels or through someone else?
- C. Draw your own impression of the Annunciation.

Moderator

Date

5. Jesus and the Cross

The Cross has a special meaning to us as Christians and Catholics.

- A. Why do we make the Sign of the Cross?
- B. How do we make this Sign in order to show our reverence for it? Demonstrate to your Moderator. Could you help someone else learn to make the Sign of the Cross? Pretend your Moderator is not a Catholic and does not know how to make this Sign and teach her how to do it.

Moderator

Date

6. Katherine Tekakwitha

Katherine Tekakwitha is the special patroness of girls who study to earn this medal.

- A. Read the story of Kateri and tell it to your family and to some of your friends. If there is a video of Kateri's life, watch it with your family.
- B. Make up a special prayer to Kateri in your own words asking her to be your friend and helper.
- C. When Kateri went to the woods to pray by herself, she often took two twigs or small branches and tied them together to make a Cross. This helped her to remember the great love of Jesus who died on the Cross for love of us. Take two twigs of small branches and tie them together to make the kind of cross Kateri made. Make a small shrine with it by arranging it with one or two other things from the woods or outdoors, perhaps with bark or leaves, or sewed to burlap to make a wall hanging, or arrange in a bowl of sand or pebbles, etc.

Moderator

Date

7. The Words of Kindness

Jesus said that whatever we do to anyone, we do to Him.

- A. Think of someone who needs your love. Why did you choose this person?
- B. Do something kind for that person. What did you choose? Write it in your log book.

Moderator

Date

8. Religious Articles

Hundreds of years ago people (many people not just Catholics) used pebbles to count prayers. Rosary beads help us to count special prayers. (At Auriesville you will find on the lawn a rosary made of stones.)

- A. Look up the story of the development of the Rosary. Write a brief account in your logbook.
- B. Make a pair of rosary beads.
- C. Study the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries. Summarize in your logbook the story they tell.
- D. In #4 you thought about the message of the *Annunciation* in your life today and in #7 you imitated what the *Visitation* is telling us about. Select one of the other Mysteries and write in your logbook how that fits into your life today. (Many news stories suggest how the Sorrowful Mysteries are like things that happen today.)

Moderator

Date

9. Handcrafts

It is helpful to make a religious object or symbol to use to celebrate a special day. From the suggestions below choose three to make.

1. A banner for one of the feast of Our Lady to hang in your room. Name the feast and explain its meaning to your Moderator.
2. A set of crèche figures (clay, papier mache, paper cut-outs, salt-and-starch mixture, etc) for your home for Christmas.
3. A loaf of bread for the family to eat on the feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Look up the life of St. Elizabeth and explain why a loaf of bread is one of her symbols.
4. Some special symbol for celebrating one of the patron saint days in your family. (Look up the patron saint of your mother, father, brothers or sisters and learn their story.)
5. Make a set of ALLELUIA place cards with beautiful lettering for the family's Easter dinner table.
6. A mobile of white paper birds (cut-outs or origami paper-folded birds) to hang at home on Pentecost Sunday – one bird for each member of the family.

Moderator

Date

10. Your Diocese

The diocese of Ogdensburg has a very interesting history.

- A. What year was the diocese of Ogdensburg formed? What diocese did it belong to before it became a diocese of its own? What diocese did it belong to before that?
- B. What is a cathedral? What is the name of the Cathedral for the Ogdensburg diocese? When was the Cathedral built?
- C. If possible, take a picture of the Cathedral and paste in your logbook.
- D. Who is the Bishop of Ogdensburg? Write a letter to him and tell him you are preparing for the Kateri Tekakwitha medal. Ask him to pray for you and your troop so that you will always be faithful to God and help to spread God's love on earth. Tell him that you are praying for him. (Make sure that you do pray for our Bishop and all our priests.)
- E. Cut a picture of the Bishop out of the North Country Catholic and paste it in your logbook.

Moderator

Date

11. Your Parish

Your parish may be older than the diocese. It, too, has a very interesting history.

- A. What is the name of your parish? Why is it named that? If for some saint, or mystery of the faith, explain this in your logbook.
- B. Find out the history of your parish and write a brief account of it in your logbook. (I have a book of the history of our parishes you can borrow.)
- C. What is your pastor's name? Perhaps your pastor will permit you to take a picture of him for your logbook. (or a picture of him with your troop.)
- D. Plan with your troop to attend and celebrate the liturgy together. Wear your uniform to this liturgy. Pray for God's blessing on you and your troop. Note this day in your logbook.

Moderator

Date

12. The Support of Your Parish

It is important to be interested in and to support your parish.

- A. Ask your pastor if there is some way you and your troop might help him. For example: babysitting during a Mass, handing out bulletins or other material at Mass, cleaning in Church or around the grounds, running errands, etc.
- B. The Church building, heat, light, etc. have to be paid for by your family and all the people in the parish. You can help, too. If there are envelopes for children in your parish, now is a good time to get in the habit of using them regularly.
- C. Are there different organizations or groups in your parish? Ask your parents or your pastor and list them in your logbook. Indicate the ones you can belong to now, the ones you can belong to in junior high or high school, the ones you can belong to as an adult.
- D. If possible, interview one of the members of the pastoral council and ask them to explain to you what they do as a council member.
- E. Note these in your logbook.

Moderator

Date

CONGRATULATIONS! You are just about finished.



Now you just need to fill out all the information that applies to you on your **APPLICATION** page.

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED, CALL YOUR PASTOR AND ASK HIM FOR AN APPOINTMENT.

For this meeting take your logbook and the Kateri Tekakwitha sheets with you. Show them to Father and tell him what you have learned by working on the Kateri Award.

Ask Father to sign your application.

Date/time of your meeting with Father _____.

Application for SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA Medal

Please Print

Date_____

Applicant_____ Age_____

Mailing Address _____ Phone_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Parish_____ City_____

Troop No. _____ Sponsored by_____

Adult Moderator_____

Address_____ Phone_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Parish_____ City_____

Having completed the requirements for Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Program, I now apply to the Diocesan Scout Office for this medal.

Signature of Adult Moderator

Signature of Applicant

Signature of Pastor (or representative)

Title

Please mail this completed Application form to:

Rev. Bryan D. Stitt
Chaplain of Catholic Committee on Scouting
P.O. Box 369
Ogdensburg, NY 13369
(315) 393-2920 ex 1450
bstitt@rcdony.org

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Application received_____ Fee received_____

Presentation Date:_____

Diocese _____ Parish _____