

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church Newsletter

July 12, 2020

My Dear Parishioners,

I pray that everyone had a great Fourth of July weekend. I myself enjoyed a small gathering with some priest friends after our Vigil Mass. While not the usual way of celebrating the Fourth, in itself it was a very nice night. In fact, I am now really thankful for that quiet celebration of our nation's independence. The smallness of the celebration actually allowed me to focus more on the significance of the day and reflect more on the contributions of so many generations of Americans that have allowed us to live in justice and freedom. Let us always lift them up in prayer and ask our Good and Gracious God to richly reward them for their sacrifices for justice and freedom.

Along the lines of living in justice and freedom, I applaud the Supreme Court for recently upholding the independence of religious institutions in two separate cases. The first case affirmed that religious institutions have a "ministerial exception" to certain labor laws and can decide for themselves which positions are classified as "ministerial." This then gives religious organizations, such as our own parish, complete control on who can work for a church or religious school, who can teach the faith in those institutions, and how that faith is taught. In the second case the court ruled in favor of the Little Sisters of the Poor and upheld religious freedom exemptions which prevent religious organizations from being forced from providing birth control to employees. Because of this, parishes such as our own can continue to practice and promote the Catholic Faith and Catholic Values without government interference.

Both are important victories for religious freedom. Let us continue to pray for religious freedom in our country. Let us also continue to pray for the sanctity of life and the end of abortion in our country.

This coming Tuesday is the Feast of the first Saint to be born in North America: St. Kateri Tekakwitha. St Kateri Tekakwitha was born of Native American parents in what was then French Canada. It would be through the prayerful and dedicated work of French Jesuit missionaries that she would be Baptized. She would go on to lead a very holy life consecrated to Jesus Christ. I have included in this newsletter a beautiful biography and reflection on the life of St. Kateri by PaulaAnne Sharkey Lemire, who has published many articles on the Saint.

For your convenience, I have also included this Sunday's Mass readings for your personal reflection. Lastly, let us continue to pray our Rosaries and Chaplets for our police and other first responders, for those infected with coronavirus, and for an end of the pandemic and return to normalcy.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

Fr. Michael J. Pawelko



The Lily and the Cross

By PaulaAnne Sharkey Lemire



The young woman now honored with such beautiful titles as "the Lily of the Mohawks" and "the Wonderworker of the New World" was born in 1656 at Ossernenon, a village of longhouses which stood on a high hill overlooking the Mohawk River. The daughter of a Turtle Clan chief and a Christian Algonquin captive, she was orphaned at the age of four when a smallpox epidemic decimated Ossernenon. With a pockmarked face and damaged eyesight from her own struggle with the dreaded disease, Tekakwitha was raised in the longhouse of her father's brother and successor.

When Tekakwitha was in her late teens, French Jesuits established a mission in her uncle's village. The Mohawk chief distrusted and disliked the Christian Blackrobes (Jesuit Missionaries), but grudgingly allowed their presence as a party of a treaty with the French. Despite her uncle's stern objection to the Blackrobes and their faith, Tekakwitha was deeply impressed by their words — perhaps they brought back childhood memories of her mother's whispered prayers — and gladly risked her family's disapproval to be baptized.

With a joyful heart, she became a follower of Christ and took the name Catherine, for St. Catherine of Siena. Catherine in her language is spelled Kateri. Subjected to persecution in her village, she fled over 300 miles to the safety of Caughnawaga, a mission village near the French settlement of Montreal. In this place, often called the Praying Castle, her already deep faith flourished. She died there several years later at the age of 24. Devotion to the holy girl began almost immediately. She was beatified on June 20, 1980 and is now one miracle away from sainthood (and she was canonized by Pope Benedict the XVI in 2012)

In the familiar prayer for her canonization, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha is referred to as "this young lover of Jesus and of His Cross." Her great devotion to Our Lord is one of the most profound aspects of her story and one that is occasionally overlooked these days when her life is simplified and sentimentalized. Yet it was Kateri herself who said, "I have given my soul to Jesus in the Eucharist and my body to Jesus on the Cross."

Her earliest biographers — two of the Jesuit missionaries who knew the Lily of the Mohawks during the last years of her life and who recorded her story soon after her death — have left us a chronicle of this great love.

In his narrative, Fr. Pierre Chauchetiere wrote that even before she was allowed to make her First Holy Communion, Kateri's heart and happiness were in the little mission chapel: "It was this desire to be united with Our Lord that brought her so often to the church and that made her find life in the forest so wearisome. The only consolation she had in her very great infirmities was to be able to drag herself to the church, where she remained with the modesty of an angel during hour after hour.

"When she entered the church, she took holy water, reminded herself of her Baptism, and renewed the resolution to live as a good Christian. Then after kneeling in some corner near the railing (for fear of distractions from those entering or leaving), she covered her face with her blanket and make an act of faith in the Real Presence of the Blessed Sacrament. She made also many interior acts of contrition, resignation, and humility, according to the inspirations she felt in her heart. She set aside a time for these visits, which brought her to the Lord five times a day without fail; in fact we can say that church was the place where one would most often find her."

The Lily and the Cross

By PaulaAnne Sharkey Lemire



No matter how bitterly cold it was in the humble church, Kateri would remain there for hours, kneeling in prayer and lost in love for the Lord. When she grew numb, the missionaries urged her to sit by the fire and warm herself. She would smile and thank them for their kindness before hurrying back to her place before the altar where she had left her heart.

Fr. Pierre Cholonoc spoke of this love, too, when he wrote of her first Holy Communion: "She approached, or rather, surrendered herself to this furnace of sacred love that burns on our altars, and she came out of it so glowing with its divine fire that only Our Lord knew what passed between Himself and His dear spouse during her first Communion. All that we can say is that from that day forward she appeared different to us, because she remained so full of God and of love of Him."

Later the same missionaries tell of how, when the winter hunt took her far from the village and prevented her from visiting the mission church, she continued her acts of devotion in the forest. She had made a little oratory in a secluded spot. There she carved a cross into the rough bark of a tree and she would kneel before it in the snow. Her head bowed beneath her shawl, her poor scarred face would burn with love as she prayed before that simple cross.

The missionaries also tell us of the severe penance that Blessed Kateri imposed upon her already frail body. She often scourged herself, slept for several nights on thorns, and burnt her thin legs with hot coals. These mortifications were all expressions of her love of Jesus upon the Cross and a way for her to share, in some small way, in His sufferings. Her scourgings were a memorial of His, the sharp brambles beneath her sleeping mat recalled His thorny crown and the hot coals branded her as His forever. Extreme as they might see now, these were one of the ways she expressed her devotion to Christ's Passion on the Cross.

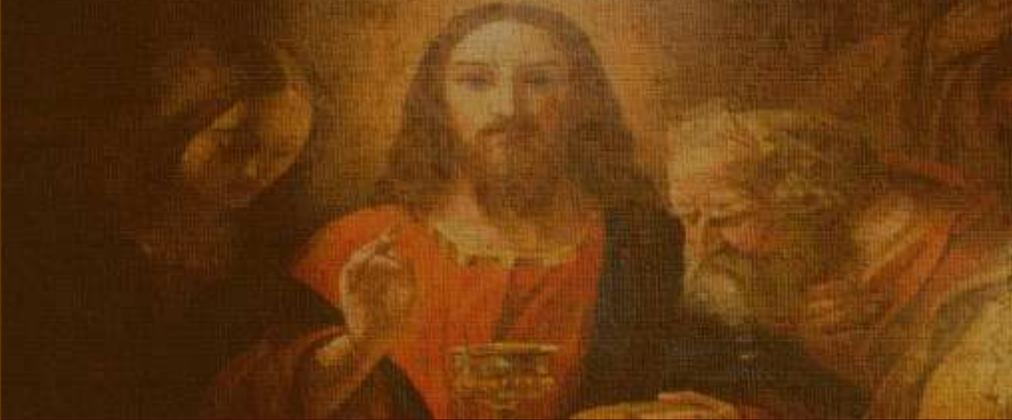
As a supreme act of love and sacrifice, Kateri renounced the world and marriage forever when she took a perpetual vow of virginity on March 25, 1679. On that day, Kateri knelt in the chapel and prayed to the Lord to accept her as His own and gave herself totally to His service.

In the end, Kateri Tekakwitha herself tells us — so eloquently and simply — of this great love in two instances.

When Kateri lay dying on Wednesday of Holy Week, 1680, the last words she spoke were, "Jesus, I love You!" As Pope John Paul II stated at her beatification, these simple words summarize her life "like a noble hymn."

Even after death, Kateri spoke of this love to Anastasia Tregonhatsiongo. At the mission of the Sault, this older Mohawk woman was her teacher and friend. She had known Kateri's Algonquin mother and looked on Kateri as a surrogate daughter. One night, some days after Kateri's death, Anastasia heard Kateri's voice calling, "Mother, arise." When she sat up and opened her eyes, she saw Kateri standing before her. But this was not the frail, scarred Kateri she had known in life. She was "brilliant with light" and her eyes were filled with joy. The heavenly light radiated from a cross that she held in her hands. She spoke once again to Anastasia: "My mother, look at this cross and see how beautiful it is! Oh, how I loved it on earth and how I still love it in Heaven!"

The Cross of Our Lord and her intense love for it had illuminated Kateri's soul. May we truly profit from her example and let it illuminate ours as well.



Sunday Mass Readings

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary

Reading 1: [IS 55:10-11](#)

Thus says the LORD:

Just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
and do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
giving seed to the one who sows

and bread to the one who eats,
so shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
my word shall not return to me void,
but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I sent it.

Responsorial Psalm: [PS 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14](#)

R. (Lk 8:8) **The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.**

- ▶ You have visited the land and watered it;
greatly have you enriched it.
God's watercourses are filled;
you have prepared the grain. **R.**
- ▶ Thus have you prepared the land:
drenching its furrows,
breaking up its clods,
Softening it with showers,
blessing its yield. **R.**

- ▶ You have crowned the year
with your bounty,
and your paths overflow
with a rich harvest;
the untilled meadows overflow with it,
and rejoicing clothes the hills. **R.**
- ▶ The fields are garmented with flocks
and the valleys blanketed with grain.
They shout and sing for joy. **R.**

Reading 2: [ROM 8:18-23](#)

Brothers and sisters: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower.
All who come to him will have life forever.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.



Sunday Mass Readings

Gospel: [MT 13:1-23](#) OR [13:1-9](#)

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

[The disciples approached him and said, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” He said to them in reply, “Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because *they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand*. Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

*You shall indeed hear but not understand,
you shall indeed look but never see.
Gross is the heart of this people,
they will hardly hear with their ears,
they have closed their eyes,
lest they see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their hearts and be converted,
and I heal them.*

“But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

“Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.” **Or** On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”]



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR DONATION

CURBSIDE DROP-OFF

July 25 & 26, 2020

GARAGE BEHIND THE CHAPEL ~ BEFORE & AFTER MASS

We ask you to wear a Mask as the Volunteers will too.



There are a few changes this year in what we are looking for. Due to space constraints, please adhere to the list below.

- Books: in good condition
- Gems and Jewelry: in good condition
- Santa's Attic: **Holiday Décor, Toys, Games, Puzzles**

Please NO HOUSEHOLD GOODS!

We are also in great need of donations for the raffle baskets. If you have any NEW items or gift cards (new or partially used) we would happily accept those. Please consider purchasing an item that would work in a raffle basket and donating it to the bazaar. Due to COVID-19, we anticipate that donations from local businesses will be down.

Questions please email: olshbazaarhilltown@gmail.com