

# RENEWING FAMILY FAITH

Why Catholic/The Celebration of the Christian Mystery/5. Baptism, a Sacrament of Initiation

We Believe

We Celebrate

We Live

We Pray

## OUR STORY

### Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

Born in 1656 in Auriesville, NY, Kateri is the first Native American being considered for sainthood. Her mother was a Christian Algonquin, taken captive by the Iroquois and given as wife to the chief of the Mohawk clan. When she was four, Kateri lost her parents and little brother in a smallpox epidemic that left her disfigured and half blind. She was adopted by an uncle, who succeeded her father as chief. He hated the coming of the Blackrobes but could do nothing to them because of a peace treaty with the French.

She was moved by the words of three Blackrobes who lodged with her uncle, but fear of him kept her from seeking instruction. She refused to marry a Mohawk brave and at 19 finally got the courage to take the step of converting. She was baptized with the name Kateri on Easter Sunday.

Now she would be treated as a slave. Because she would not work on Sunday, she received no food that day. She told a missionary that she often meditated on the great dignity of being baptized. She was powerfully moved by God's love for human beings and saw the dignity of each of her people. She was always in danger, for her conversion and holy life created great opposition. On the advice of a priest, she stole away one night and began a 200-mile walking journey to a Christian Indian village near



Portrait of Kateri

Joseph Izallio, Esq. © 1992. Used with permission.

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## Baptism Tradition

**N**ow about baptism: This is how to baptize. Give public instruction on all these points, and then baptize in running water, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." If you do not have running water, baptize in some other. If you cannot in cold, then in warm. If you have neither, then pour water on the head three times "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

The Didache, Second Century

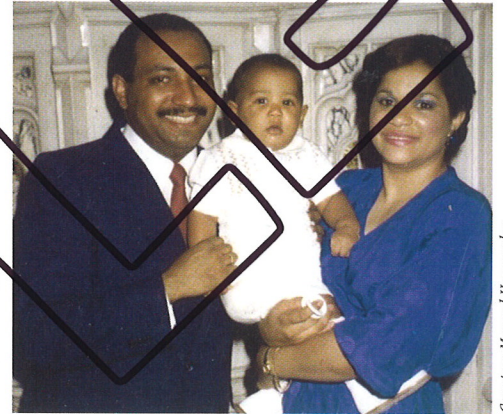
### King Edwin's Baptism

King Edwin, with all the nobility of his kingdom and a large number of humbler folk, accepted the faith and were washed in the cleansing waters of baptism in the eleventh year of his reign, which was the year of our Lord 627, and about one hundred and eighty years after the first arrival of the English in Britain. The king's baptism took place at York on Easter Day, the twelfth of April, in the church of Saint Peter the Apostle, which the king had hastily built of timber during the time of his instruction and preparation for baptism; and in this city he established the see of his teacher and bishop, Paulinus. Soon after his baptism, at Paulinus' suggestion, he gave orders to build on the same site a large and more noble basilica of stone, which was to enclose the little oratory he had built before.

Indeed, so great was the fervor of faith and desire for baptism among the Northumbrian people that Paulinus is said to have accompanied the king and queen to the royal residence at Adgefrin and remained there thirty-six days constantly occupied in instructing and baptizing. During this period, he did nothing from dawn to dusk but proclaim Christ's saving message to the people, who gathered from all the surrounding villages and countryside; and when he had instructed them, he washed them in the cleansing waters of baptism in the nearby River Glen.

Bede, Seventh Century

from a *Baptism Sourcebook*, Liturgy Training Publications



Courtesy Manuel Hernandez

### Reflect

- What does it mean to you to be baptized into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus?
- How might you renew your baptismal commitment regularly?

## BLESSINGS

EPHPHATHA: That is, be opened, that you may profess the faith you hear, to the praise and glory of God.

*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*



# Our Story

Continued from the front...

Montreal.

For three years she grew in holiness under the direction of a priest and an older Iroquois woman, giving herself totally to God in long hours of prayer, in charity, and in strenuous penance. At 23, she took a vow of virginity, an unprecedented act for an Indian woman, whose future depended on being married. Her dedication to virginity was instinctive: She did not know about religious life for women until she visited Montreal. Inspired by this, she and two friends wanted to start a community, but the local priest dissuaded her. She humbly accepted an "ordinary" life. She practiced extremely severe fasting as penance for the conversion of her nation. She died the afternoon before Holy Thursday. She was beatified in 1980.

Adapted from Leonard Foley, OFM & Pat McCloskey, OFM, *Saint of the Day*, St. Anthony Messenger

## TABLE TALK

- How does your Baptism make a difference in the way you live?
- Where does Jesus fit into your life as a Christian?

## Pondering the Word

*"A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"*

Mark 1:3

**Reflect:** What is the way of the Lord? How do you prepare for this?

## WHY CATHOLIC?

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# PARENTING

## In-laws

"Our family of origin can be a source of love and support, or a source of anguish. For many of us, it is a little of both. As we grow up, move into the world of work, choose a mate, and choose our 'own' lifestyle, our philosophy of life begins to gel. We may be surprised to find how different or how similar we are to our parents and siblings. Raising children, especially, can be the benchmark of what our values are.

"These factors can influence our own relationship with our spouse. How much loyalty do we feel to our 'previous' family? Does it get in the way of forming our new family, based on a balance of traditions we have brought with us? The standard question for newlyweds, but one that may not be so funny, is: 'Where do we go for Christmas?' It goes beyond how to raise the children. It means deciding how to honor the traditions with which we grew up, and to blend these into what will become our own family's customs."

Maureen S. Hagan, *Nurturing Our Commitment: The Early Married Years*, RENEW International

### For Reflection:

- Does your family have a mostly positive or mostly negative impact on your marriage?
- If positive, what can you do to nurture that? If negative, how can you change it?
- How different or similar are your siblings when it comes to values?

# FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## Ten actions to strengthen family life

Consider these actions:

- Organize a young couple's sharing group.
- Start a playgroup for toddlers.
- Host a Parenting Seminar at the parish.
- Have a Parish Family Picnic or Covered Dish Supper.
- Initiate regular Family Masses.
- Encourage the offering of Family Religious Education opportunities.
- Begin a shared baby-sitting service among those with children.
- Conduct a workshop on Sharing Faith in the Family.
- Obtain bulletin inserts and/or reproducible handouts on family life and distribute on weekends.
- Publicize local community offerings on parenting and/or strengthening family life through the parish bulletin or newsletter.

Adapted from Catherine Martin, *Strengthening Family Life*, RENEW International

"Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ..."

Explore the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. See paragraph 1267.

The family is the center and heart of the civilization of love.

John Paul II