



# **KATERI Native American Saint: The Life and Miracles of Kateri Tekakwitha, Commemorative Canonization Edition, Rome 2012**

*Giovanna Paponetti*

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Contained within the pages of this Commemorative Canonization Edition, Rome 2012 are twenty-one exquisite paintings on the life of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha with accompanying text by celebrated fine artist and storyteller Giovanna Paponetti. A compelling foreword is written by Archbishop Charles Chaput.

Giovanna's journey with St. Kateri began with a commission to create these works of art by St. John the Baptist church at Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, New Mexico in 2005. The series was completed in 2010. This church is the oldest parish in the United States. The art panels are installed in an eighteen-foot high, hand-carved altar screen.

Beginning with her birth in 1656, the book documents St. Kateri's life and her transformation into a spiritual and sacred being. Referred to as "The Lily of the Mohawks," she was a devout Christian woman until her death in 1680.

Giovanna's education in Anthropology and Fine Art compelled her to travel to St. Kateri's native New York and to Canada where Kateri died, for her research. Giovanna was able to capture contemporary Mohawk tribal members portraying the life of Kateri and her people. This creative and uniquely authentic method imbues the images with a startling reality and a mystical softness, which helps propel the reader into the beauty and rawness of the times.

KATERI Native American Saint was a finalist for the New Mexico Book Award in 2011. Paponetti's book caught the attention of Cardinals, members of the Congregation of Saints at the Vatican, who received copies and sent letters of appreciation to her. Giovanna Paponetti was subsequently invited to Rome for the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American to receive sainthood, on October 21, 2012.

Giovanna resides in Taos New Mexico, where she is an Adjunct Professor of Art at the University of New Mexico, Taos branch. Her paintings have been published in history textbooks, and shown in PBS documentaries.

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