



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief Randy Hart
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PRESS RELEASE

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Mohawk Artist Presents *Kateri Tekakwitha* Portrait

To Be Considered as Official Portrait in Vatican

Akwesasne Territory. On July 13, 2012, Mohawk artist Jordan Thompson presented a beautiful pen and ink portrait of *Kateri Tekakwitha* to Debbie Thomas. Ms. Thomas will submit it to Catholic Church officials during the *Kateri* Conference to be held on Wednesday July 18, 2012 near Albany. The portrait itself is full of symbolism. Because *Kateri* was a member of the turtle clan, a turtle is featured along with 24 lilies representing each year of her life. The "Three Sisters" of corn, beans and squash are pictured since one of *Kateri's* tasks was to work as a gardener where she would construct a wooden cross tied with a rope. As a result of small pox, *Kateri* became partially blind, which is also depicted in the portrait. A rosary is also pictured since she always had it beside her.

The Catholic Church is considering *Kateri* for sainthood. She is the only Native person ever considered for sainthood. Pope John Paul beatified her in June 1980. The next step is canonization, which the Pope has pledged to do later this year. Her portrait will eventually travel to the Vatican in Rome for consideration as being the official portrait during the canonization process, the last step before achieving sainthood.

Jordan is the first Mohawk artist to portray *Kateri* and felt that the symbolism was important. "I wanted to represent those symbolic Mohawk elements into the picture since they reflect important aspects of her life," he remarked. "I also think it's important to be as accurate as possible."

Jordan was born in 1982 and raised on the Akwesasne Mohawk Territory on an island on the St. Lawrence River. He is turtle clan and his Mohawk name, *Tehaweiakaron*, translates to "Wide Wingspan" or "Broad Shoulders." Jordan has been an artist from a very young age. He draws his inspiration from the Mohawk culture. His art conveys emotion, spirituality, intensity, pride, and power from the perspective of a young Mohawk man. Jordan currently resides in the Territory with his wife Diane and twin boys Adrian and Liam.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.

Helping Build A Better Tomorrow

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Debbie Thomas, Mohawk Artist Jordan Thompson and Chief Randy Hart