



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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PRESS RELEASE

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Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Supports *Tekakwitha* Conference

Catholic Pope to Canonize Kateri Tekakwitha

Akwesasne Territory — On Tuesday April 10, 2012, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council presented the *Tekakwitha* Conference committee with a check for \$25,000 to support the 73rd Annual *Tekakwitha* Conference. This year's conference will be held in Albany, New York July 18 to 22, 2012. Native American Catholics and traditional Native Americans have been traveling to different parts of the US and Canada for years to attend this conference. Catholic Church leaders, Indian clergy and missionaries also take part in the conference. The conference planning committee raised nearly \$30,000 for the event. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne have each contributed \$25,000.

Conference organizers expect over 1,000 people to attend from the United States and Canada which will be held at the Holiday Inn near the Albany Airport. The conference opens with a grand entry of various Indian Nations from Canada and the U.S. Each parish and *Kateri* Praying Circle is named and acknowledged as the delegates pass the main stage. The entrance is made to the beat of traditional drums of various Indian nations. Local political officials give a major welcome ceremony. The opening ceremony is finished with prayers, meals and the meeting of old friends from many nations. Other conference activities include sun rise prayer services, daily masses, Mohawk children putting on plays about *Kateri Tekakwitha's* life and numerous health services asking for *Kateri's* help for cures. The event will also feature a pow-wow.

The cost of the conference will exceed \$70,000 which will go to tent and table rentals, transportation, meals and insurance. Transportation is a major item for travel from hotels to the Fonda Shrine, and to the Auriesville Shrine. These outings will feature large prayer services and meals after which attendees will return to their hotels in Albany.

Kateri Tekakwitha, of the Mohawk Tribe, is the first and only Native person to be considered by the Catholic Church for sainthood. She was baptized at age 20, but died when she was 24. Pope John Paul beatified her in June 1980 and the next step is canonization which the Pope has pledged to do later this year. Nationally and internationally, many prayer groups and *Tekakwitha* cause groups have pledged their time and resources to support path to *Kateri Tekakwitha's* sainthood. Later this year, many groups are scheduled to go to Rome Italy to have an audience with the Pope and to witness the canonization of *Kateri Tekakwitha*.

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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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