

*See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your hearts revive!
For the LORD hears the poor*

The words from the last verse of the Psalm seem to speak from the life of today's Blessed – Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.

Known as 'the Flower of the Algonquin' and 'the Lily of the Mohawks,' Kateri was orphaned when she was only four years old during a smallpox epidemic in upstate New York.

For the most part, smallpox has been eliminated as a disease in most parts of the world ... 350 years ago, it was responsible for 400,000 deaths annually in Europe.

Kateri survived the epidemic, but was partially blinded, had scars on her face, and was unsteady for the remainder of her life.

Her mother was a Catholic Algonquin, and her father was a Mohawk chief.

Kateri desired to become Christian, but was prevented by her guardian until she began to take instruction at the age of 18.

For the next two years, she was the object of ridicule for her Faith; and eventually traveled from New York state to north of Montreal to live in a native American Christian community.

Despite losing her sight ... and her family to smallpox – a disease brought by the Europeans; she was able to see beyond the ill-effects, and embraced the Christian faith which came as well through European missionaries.

In the Gospel, Jesus quotes from the prophet Isaiah:

*Will you be exalted to heaven?
You will go down to the netherworld.*

And we might choose to reflect on our own position between these two texts from Psalms and Isaiah — are we among the lowly ones, who seek God, and are glad? Or do we desire to exalt ourselves, and end up in the netherworld ... the ones to whom Jesus cries out "Woe to you!"

Let us pray through the intercession of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, that we might be able to persevere in seeking God in our own lowliness and sufferings, so that our hearts may revive and be glad. And never attempt to exalt ourselves to the point that we lose our place as beloved and chosen sons and daughters of God the Father, redeemed in Christ, and receive the graces poured out in the Holy Spirit.