

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2026

Relics of St. Kateri Tekakwitha and St. Jean de Brébeuf to Travel Across Northern Ontario in January Pilgrimage Tour

ANDERSON LAKE, ON — January 15, 2026 — The relics of **St. Kateri Tekakwitha**, the first Indigenous North American saint, and **St. Jean de Brébeuf**, one of the Canadian Martyrs, will travel across Northern Ontario beginning January 15, 2026, as part of a special 10-day pilgrimage tour focused on prayer, healing, and reconciliation.

The Northern Ontario leg of the relic tour will begin at the **Anishinabe Spiritual Centre** and continue north through multiple dioceses, including stops in Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Kapuskasing, Moosonee, Aroland, Long Lac, and Sudbury, before returning to the Martyrs' Shrine in Midland.

The tour will be accompanied by **Edwina MacDonald**, Executive Director of the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre, her husband **Mark MacDonald**, and **Father John O'Brien, S.J.**, Director of the Martyrs' Shrine who will lead reflections and provide historical and spiritual context at each stop.

“This relic pilgrimage is about encounter,” said MacDonald. “It brings the stories of the saints to communities that are often distant from major pilgrimage sites and invites reflection on faith, history, healing, and reconciliation—especially here in Northern Ontario.”

“Relics remind us that faith is not abstract, it is lived and embodied in real places and real people,” said **Father John O'Brien, S.J.** “Bringing the relics of St. Kateri Tekakwitha and St. Jean de Brébeuf to Northern Ontario is an invitation to prayer, to honest reflection on our shared history, and to hope for healing and reconciliation.”

Relics are physical reminders of the lives of saints and are venerated in the Catholic tradition as signs of spiritual connection, continuity, and hope. The purpose of the tour is to allow communities, particularly in northern and remote regions, to encounter these relics locally, without the need to travel long distances.

Each community event may include a Mass, a talk by Father O'Brien, and time for personal prayer and veneration. The relics are on a national tour across Canada, bringing opportunities for prayer and reflection to regions whose residents may not otherwise be able to visit major pilgrimage sites.

NORTHERN ONTARIO RELIC TOUR – ITINERARY

Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

- **Jan 15** – Espanola (Anderson Lake), event at Anishinabe Spiritual Centre (7-9:00 pm Mass with Bishop Dowd)
- **Jan 16** – Sault Ste. Marie; event at Precious Blood Cathedral (3-7:00 pm, 4:00 pm Mass)

Diocese of Timmins

- **Jan 18** – Timmins, event at St. Anthony of Padua Cathedral (9:00 am – 3:00 pm, 2:00 pm Mass)

Diocese of Hearst–Moosonee

- **Jan 19** – Moosonee; event at Christ the King Church (5-8:00 pm, 7:00 pm Mass)
- **Jan 21** – Long Lac; event at Paroisse Jean-Baptiste, (6-8:00 pm, 6:00 pm Mass)
- **Jan 22** – Aroland; Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, (6-8:00 pm, 6:00 pm Mass)
- **Jan 23** – Kapuskasing; Paroisse Immaculée Conception, (6-8pm 6pm Mass with Bishop Tremblay)

Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie (Return Trip)

- **Jan 25** – Sudbury; St. Patrick’s Church, (10:00 am-2:00 pm, 10:00 am Mass)
- **Jan 26** – Midland; Return to Martyrs’ Shrine

Note: Weather and travel conditions may impact this schedule.

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BACKGROUNDER

About the Martyrs' Shrine

Located in Midland, Ontario, the **Martyrs' Shrine** is a National Historic Site and major Catholic pilgrimage destination. It commemorates the Canadian Martyrs and preserves relics and artifacts connected to early Christian missions in Canada.

About the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre

The **Anishinabe Spiritual Centre** is an Indigenous-led spiritual and cultural retreat centre located on the North Shore of Lake Huron. The Centre is dedicated to healing, education, reconciliation, and dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, grounded in Anishinaabe spirituality and Catholic faith traditions.

About St. Kateri Tekakwitha

St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656–1680) was a Mohawk woman born in what is now New York State. Orphaned at a young age and later baptized as a Catholic, she lived a life of prayer, humility, and devotion despite persecution and illness. Canonized in 2012, she is the first Indigenous saint of North America and is widely revered as a patron of Indigenous peoples, ecology, and reconciliation.

About St. Jean de Brébeuf

St. Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649) was a French Jesuit missionary who lived and worked among the Huron-Wendat people in the early 17th century. He was martyred during the Huron-Iroquois conflicts and later canonized as one of the Canadian Martyrs. His life and death remain a complex symbol of faith, sacrifice, and the early encounter between Indigenous peoples and European missionaries.

About the Relics

The relics include major relics associated with the Canadian Martyrs and St. Kateri Tekakwitha. For more than a century, many of the Canadian Martyrs' relics have been housed at the **Martyrs' Shrine**, a national pilgrimage site. The current tour allows communities across Canada—particularly in remote and northern regions—to encounter these relics locally.